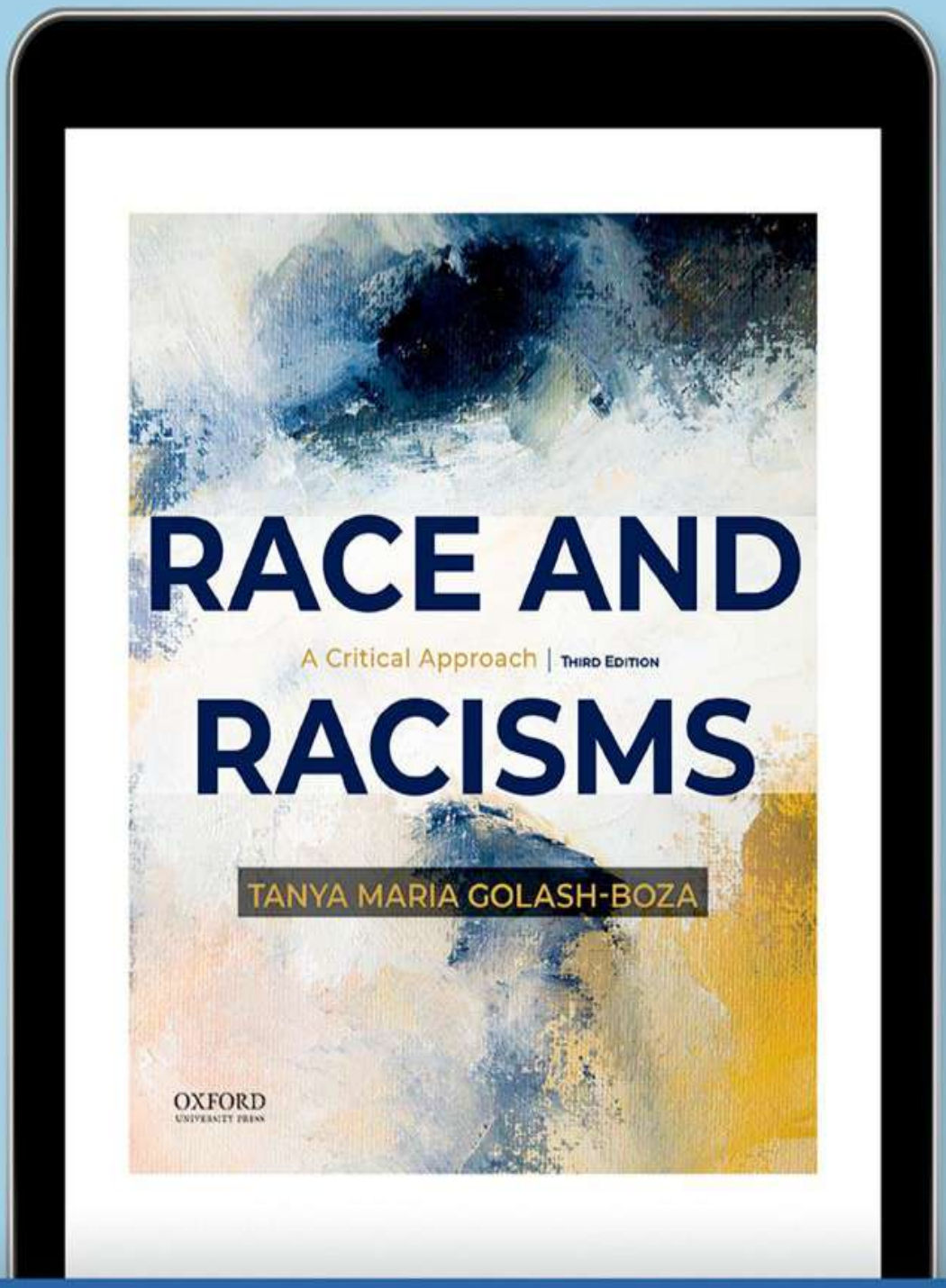

Enhanced eBook

This image shows the cover of Race and Racisms: A Critical Approach

Race and Racisms

A Critical Approach

Third Edition

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

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About the Author

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza holds a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Maryland, a Certificate of Anthropology from L'Ecole d'Anthropologie in Paris, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a Professor of Sociology at the University of California–Merced. In addition to this textbook, she is the author of four books, *Deported* (2015), *Due Process Denied* (2012),

Immigration Nation (2012), and *Yo Soy Negro: Blackness in Peru* (2011); and the editor of *Forced Out and Fenced In* (2018). She has also published dozens of articles in peer-reviewed journals on deportations, race and racism, and U.S. Latinas/os and Latin America, in addition to essays and chapters in edited volumes and online venues such as *Al Jazeera*, *The Nation*, *Salon,* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Tanya's innovative scholarship was awarded the 2010 Distinguished Early Career Award from the Racial and Ethnic Minorities Studies Section of the American Sociological Association. In 2013, she was awarded the UC Merced Academic Senate Award for Distinguished Scholarly Public Service. In 2016, her book *Deported* was awarded the Distinguished Contribution to Research Book Award from the Latina/o Studies Section of the American Sociological Association. She is also the creator of the blog Get a Life, Ph.D., which focuses on academic success and well-being and has millions of pageviews. She was the 2017–2018 Chair of the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity Committee for the University of California Senate and served on the Executive Council of the American Sociological Association from 2014 to 2017.

Tanya has been teaching undergraduate and graduate courses on race and ethnicity since 2003. Prior to joining the faculty at the University of California, she was an Assistant Professor at the University of Kansas. She lives in Merced, California, with her husband and three children. She has lived in Latin America, Europe, and the Caribbean and speaks fluent English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.

Preface

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

I wrote the revisions for this third edition of *Race and Racisms* in 2020, the most tumultuous year in recent U.S. history. In March 2020, I returned to my home in California after giving research presentations at several East Coast venues. I had no idea I would not be on a plane again for months. The week I returned, it became clear that the coronavirus pandemic would change our lives. I could not have foreseen how long it would last, but as Chair of the Public Health Department at my university, I needed to act quickly. The department and then the entire university moved all meetings and classes online. My children's schools closed. California issued a shelter-in-place order. And I, along with the rest of the nation, was left struggling to make sense of our new world. In the twelve months between March 2020 and March 2021, over half a million people would die in the United States as a result of contracting COVID-19, with Black and Indigenous people dying at 1.4 times the rate of White people.

The pandemic hit amid ongoing turmoil related to violence against Black people. On March 13, 2020, White police officers killed Black emergency medical technician Breonna Taylor in her own home in Louisville, Kentucky. On May 5, 2020, a video was released of two White men chasing down and murdering Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old Black man out for a jog in Brunswick, Georgia. And on May 25 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, White police officer Derek Chauvin killed George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, by kneeling on his neck and pinning him to the ground for nearly 9 minutes. These three extrajudicial killings of Black people sparked a wave of protests around the country that lasted

throughout the summer of 2020. Police officers shot tear gas and rubber bullets into crowds, and mayors invoked curfews.

In January 2021, following the election of Joe Biden as president of the United States, rioters supporting outgoing president Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol, spurred on by Trump. The nation and the world watched in disbelief. Whereas anti-brutality protestors had been met with rubber bullets, tear gas, and batons for expressing their First Amendment rights, the mostly White pro-Trump activists were not.

As current events continue to show, racism remains deeply embedded in the minds, hearts, and institutions of the United States. It is encouraging that readers like you are taking the time to teach and learn more about the past, present, and future of race in America. I hope this book will be a useful tool in your journey.

Approach

The traditional “group-by-group” approach to teaching this course does not accurately reflect the broader story of race and ethnicity in the United States. It does not sufficiently account for intersectionality, which is inextricably linked to racial and ethnic inequality, and it does not reflect students’ lived experiences. Students often come into this course thinking they understand race, but they rarely understand how the definition of race has changed over time. As they work through the course, the extent of racism and inequality built into American society can be overwhelming.

The third edition of *Race and Racisms* addresses these teaching issues and challenges head-on by taking a topical, critical, and contemporary approach that engages students in significant questions of racial dynamics. In accessible, straightforward language, the text thoughtfully introduces and analyzes cutting-edge scholarship in the field. It emphasizes how and when the idea of race was created and how it has developed and changed over time; how structural racism has worked historically to reproduce inequality; how race, class, and gender work together to create inequality and identities; and how racial justice could be imagined and realized.

Features

Race and Racisms includes several unique features designed to aid both teaching and learning. Each of the following features appears throughout the book:

- voices boxes highlight individual stories related to race and racism, bringing personal experiences to life.
- research focus boxes describe recent scholarship in the field, showing students that this is an active and vibrant area of interest for researchers.
- GLOBAL VIEW boxes introduce race-related phenomena as they are experienced in other parts of the world, to help students look beyond race and racism in the United States.
- **As You Read** questions point students to the key ideas in each chapter.
- **Chapter-opening excerpts** provide relevant readings as an entry point into the material.
- **Marginal Glossary** definitions reinforce key concepts.
- **Check Your Understanding** chapter summaries are now structured around the As You Read questions, incorporating both **Review and Critical Thinking** questions.
- **At a Glance** infographics show striking statistics in a visually powerful way.
- **Talking about Race** guidelines in the front matter and at the end of each chapter suggest ways to approach discussions about race and racism.

New in this Edition

The goal for the third edition of *Race and Racisms* was not merely to keep up with our changing world but to invite students to consider their own role in it. Each chapter has been carefully updated to reflect current issues and events as well as the latest data and research. Beyond these updates, new stories and examples throughout engage readers in thinking about how racism could be addressed or alleviated. Highlights of this edition include:

- Enhancements to the intersectional framework throughout, paying closer attention to gender and adding in sexuality
- Coverage of the shift toward overt racism, not just microaggressions but also macroaggressions
- Updates to account for the Trump era, changes in how racism continues to operate, and current research and events
- Additional and updated coverage of the Black Lives Matter movement
- Increased coverage of settler colonialism versus imperialism
- More coverage of racism faced by Asians and Middle Easterners
- New enhanced ebook with incorporated review questions and video clips

Following this preface, we include an overview for the Talking about Race feature. We hope this overview, **Talking about Race Outside the Classroom**, will serve as a practical guide on how to have thoughtful, informed, rational discussions about race and racism. These are sensitive and emotional topics that many people have difficulty approaching. This overview encourages students to engage in constructive conversations

about race and provides tips for countering racist ideology. At the end of each chapter, a brief Talking about Race section provides some more specific suggestions for approaching these conversations.

Highlights of new material by chapter include the following:

Chapter 1: Opening excerpt from Nikole Hannah-Jones, *The New York Times Magazine*, "Our democracy's ideals were false when they were written"

Chapter 2: *Voices: Making Home in the Borderlands between China, the United States, and Mexico*, by Wong Foon Chuck

Chapter 3: Opening excerpt from Ibram Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist*

Chapter 4: ***Voices***: *As an Asian-American, I'm Tired of Being Racially Gaslit By My Peers*, by Jennifer Li; ***Voices****: J. F. "Smitty" Smith*, by Maria Duenas; new section: White Supremacy and Settler Colonialism; *research focus:* White Supremacy, Patriarchy, and Global Capitalism in Migration Studies, by Maria Duenas

Chapter 5: ***Voices****:* #CiteBlackWomen; ***Voices****:* From "What's Wrong with Cultural Appropriation? These 9 Answers Reveal Its Harm"; *research focus:* A Qualitative Analysis of Asian and Latinx Characters on Television

Chapter 6: ***Voices***: Neha Dixit; ***Voices****:* Why Black People Discriminate among Ourselves: The Toxic Legacy of Colorism; ***Voices****:* After #NotFairandLovely: Changing Thought Patterns Instead of Skin Tone

Chapter 7: *research focus* The Limits of Whiteness; *Global View:* Social, Cultural, and Intergenerational Whitening in Latin America; new sections: History of Racial and Ethnic Classifications, Are Latinx People a Race or Ethnicity?, Racialized Assimilation

Chapter 8: Opening excerpt from Amanda Lewis and John B. Diamond, Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools; Voices: Andrew Yang's Problematic Reinforcement of the Model Minority Myth; new section: Tracking

Chapter 9: New section: COVID-19 and Racial Economic Disparities; ***Voices****:* Foraging on the Margins of the Labor Market; *research focus:* Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market, by Maria Duenas; *Global View:* Do Some Countries Discriminate More Than Others?

Chapter 10: ***Voices****:* How America's Vast Racial Wealth Gap Grew: By Plunder; *research focus:* Ten Myths about Closing the Racial Wealth Gap

Chapter 11: Opening excerpt from Robin D. G. Kelley, "Why We Won't Wait"; *Voices:* How Can We Reconcile Prison Abolition with #MeToo?; ***Voices****:* The #SayHerName Social Movement, by Maria Duenas; new section: Black Lives Matter

Chapter 12: *research focus:* Racial Capitalism: A Fundamental Cause of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Inequities in the United States; ***Voices****:* I'm Sick of Asking the Children of Flint to Be Resilient*; research focus:* Race, Disability, and Poverty, by Maria Duenas

Chapter 13: Global View: "Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas," by Maria Duenas; ***Voices****:* The Zarour Family; *research focus:* "The Refugee Crisis at the United States–Mexico Border," by Maria Duenas

Chapter 14: ***Voices****:* How the Murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd Reignited a Movement

Organization

Race and Racisms is divided into three sections, each using an intersectional framework and global considerations to guide our understanding of racial dynamics in the United States:

- **Part I, Racial Ideologies**, draws from history, anthropology, and sociology to explain how racial ideologies were created and how they have evolved over time. This section provides a provocative historical and theoretical analysis that is rarely encountered in sociology texts, considering the effects of colonialism, scientific racism, nativism, and inequality. In addition, it invites in-depth discussion by examining prevailing racial attitudes in the context of recent U.S. history, the media, colorism, and white privilege.
- **Part II, Policy and Institutions**, focuses on racial inequality, educational and labor market inequality, housing and wealth, the criminal justice system, health and the environment, and immigration policy. This section highlights the empirical evidence for racial inequality.
- **Part III, Contesting and Comparing Racial Injustices**, considers racial justice, human rights, and racial dynamics around the world, helping us to look forward by looking outward.

Enhanced Ebook

This enhanced ebook offers interactive multimedia content integrated with the text and is ideal for self-study. Each chapter includes the following:

- Video clips to engage students in learning about race and racisms
- Flashcards to help students master new vocabulary
- Multiple-choice self-quizzes at the end of each major section and at chapter ends

Oxford Learning Link

Oxford Learning Link at **www.oup.com/he/golash-boza3e** is your hub for a wealth of engaging digital learning tools and resources. Material hosted there includes the instructor's manual, test bank, PowerPoint presentations, videos, filmographies, activities, recommended links and readings, and all student resources. Multiple-choice self-quizzes and glossary flashcards help students review the material and check their understanding. In addition, Oxford Learning Link Direct brings the high-quality digital teaching and learning tools for *Race and Racisms: A Critical Approach* right to your local learning management system.

Acknowledgments

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I did not write this book alone. In fact, many of these chapters were written in the company of fabulous colleagues in coffee shops and cabins across the United States as well as in writing meetings on Zoom during the COVID19 pandemic. I'd like to extend a special thanks to my writing partners: Zulema Valdez, Ayu Saraswati, Christina Lux, Dalia Magaña, Whitney Pirtle, Amani Nuru-Jeter, Jemima Pierre, Winddance Twine, and Vilna Treitler. Thanks also to Maria Dueñas, Maria Escobar, and Jay Colond for their research assistance. A very special thanks to the wonderful scholars who allowed us to use their writings in Voices sections throughout this book, including the Arabian Street Artists, Gina Crosley-Corcoran, Glenda Flores, Namira Islam, Daren W. Jackson, Stephanie Nolen, Whitney Pirtle, Ali Saad, Opal Tometi, and Sabriya Ihsan Williams.

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Talking About Race Outside the Classroom

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

This book is designed primarily for classroom use. I hope teachers and students find the analyses, narratives, and data it conveys helpful in generating productive class engagements on racial justice, racial equity, and race relations. Learning, however, is a lifelong experience. And, as many of my students point out, few people you encounter in your daily life will be privy to all the knowledge and insight conveyed in this book. So, how do you—the reader—carry this knowledge from the classroom to your living room, to the coffee shop, to the dining room table, to the bar, or to your workplace? How do you talk about race outside the classroom?

Each chapter of this book concludes with a "Talking about Race" section that provides some suggestions on how to have conversations about the specific topics in that chapter. Here, I'd like to more generally address the issue of discussing race.

Conversations about race can be either premeditated or surprise. Premeditated conversations can be easier because you can decide ahead of time how and why you would like to broach a topic with a friend, family member, or coworker. Surprise conversations are a bit harder to deal with because you have to respond on the spot—and many times emotions can make it more difficult to have level-headed responses. Let's consider each of these two conversation types in turn, as they are quite different and require different tools.

Let's say an organization you are involved in has a policy that disadvantages people of color. You decide you would like to initiate a conversation with the leaders so that they will reconsider the policy. Here are some tips for having a productive conversation with your colleagues, drawn from a brief by the Annie E. Casey Foundation on "How to Talk about Race":

- **Emphasize shared values.** Begin the conversation by focusing on what you all may agree on.
- **Provide more than a critique.** Offer a manageable solution that can be implemented.
- **Use narratives more than numbers.** Provide concrete examples of how people are affected by the current policy and how a change could benefit them.
- **Emphasize shared goals.** Present the change you are proposing as an opportunity for the organization to move forward.

It is helpful when you have an opportunity to prepare for a discussion about race. Often, however, we encounter racial microaggressions, macroaggressions, overt acts of racism, or other forms of bigotry and have to respond on the spot. Of course, you can choose not to respond, but even silence is a response in and of itself.

How do you respond if you experience a microaggression? What if you are sitting with friends and someone makes a racial or racist joke? What if you witness someone mistreating a person because of race? Having a strategy ready ahead of time can make it easier to respond in the moment. Here are some options:

- **Respond with silence.** If you are with someone who tells a racist joke, you can be silent. By not laughing, you are sending a message that this joke is not appropriate.
- **Leave the room.** If you are with a group of people, and the conversation takes a turn toward complaining about a particular

ethnic group, you can exit the room or grab your keys and leave the event. That sends a signal that their conversation is not appropriate.

- **Question the statement.** If you are with a group of people, and one of them says that all black people are great dancers, you can ask them why they think that. You can push them and ask if they think it is genetic or cultural. You can keep asking them questions to help them see that their statement is problematic.
- **Ask the person making a racist statement if they would make the statement in different company.** For example, if someone makes a joke about Jewish people, ask them if they would feel comfortable making the joke in front of Jewish people. That may help them and others in the room see that the statement is problematic.

Hearing a bigoted joke or statement—directed at you or others—can stop you in your tracks. How you respond is a personal decision, one based on your personality as well as your relationships with others. It is important to know that you have options—ranging from silence to leaving to responding directly. Thinking through these options ahead of time will make you better prepared to respond.

PART I

RACIAL IDEOLOGIES

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

1

The Origin of the Idea of Race

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

Employment of Negroes in Agriculture. Earle Wilton Richardson. 1934. Oil on canvas, 48 × 32 in. (*Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC/Art Resource, NY*)

As You Read

- **1.1** What are race and ethnicity? What is racism?
- **1.2** How old is racism? How is race distinct from previous ways of thinking about human difference?
- **1.3** How did the writers of the U.S. Constitution think of slavery?
- **1.4** How did the Indian Removal Act affect Native Americans?
- **1.5** What role did science play in the propagation of racism?

The Declaration of Independence unequivocally states that: “all men are created equal” and have liberty as one of their “unalienable rights.” When Thomas Jefferson wrote these powerful words, more than 500,000 people of African descent were held in bondage in the United States. In this excerpt, Nikole Hannah-Jones describes the fundamental contradiction on which the United States was founded: a nation that holds freedom in such high regard not only was founded on slavery but also owes to formerly enslaved people its democracy.

In August 1619, just 12 years after the English settled Jamestown, Va., one year before the Puritans landed at Plymouth Rock and some 157 years before the English colonists even decided they wanted to form their own country, the Jamestown colonists bought 20 to 30 enslaved Africans from English pirates. The pirates had stolen them from a Portuguese slave ship that had forcibly taken them from what is now the country of Angola. Those men and women who came ashore on that August day were the beginning of American slavery. They were among the 12.5 million Africans who would be kidnapped from their homes and brought in chains across the Atlantic Ocean in the largest forced migration in human history until the Second

World War. Almost two million did not survive the grueling journey, known as the Middle Passage.

Before the abolishment of the international slave trade, 400,000 enslaved Africans would be sold into America. Those individuals and their descendants transformed the lands to which they'd been brought into some of the most successful colonies in the British Empire. Through backbreaking labor, they cleared the land across the Southeast. They taught the colonists to grow rice. They grew and picked the cotton that at the height of slavery was the nation's most valuable commodity, accounting for half of all American exports and 66 percent of the world's supply. They built the plantations of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, sprawling properties that today attract thousands of visitors from across the globe captivated by the history of the world's greatest democracy. They laid the foundations of the White House and the Capitol, even placing with their unfree hands the Statue of Freedom atop the Capitol dome. They lugged the heavy wooden tracks of the railroads that crisscrossed the South and that helped take the cotton they picked to the Northern textile mills, fueling the Industrial Revolution. They built vast fortunes for White people North and South—at one time, the second- richest man in the nation was a Rhode Island "slave trader." Profits from Black people's stolen labor helped the young nation pay off its war debts and financed some of our most prestigious universities. It was the relentless buying, selling, insuring, and financing of their bodies and the products of their labor that made Wall Street a thriving banking, insurance, and trading sector and New York City the financial capital of the world.

But it would be historically inaccurate to reduce the contributions of Black people to the vast material wealth created by our bondage. Black Americans have also been,

> and continue to be, foundational to the idea of American freedom. More than any other group in this country's history, we have served, generation after generation, in an overlooked but vital role: It is we who have been the perfecters of this democracy.
>
> *Source: Hannah-Jones, Nikole. "Our democracy's founding ideals were false when they were written. Black Americans have fought to make them true." New York Times Sunday Magazine (2019). August 14.*

When British colonists settled in the land known today as the United States of America, their goal was to extract resources from this vast land. They soon realized they would need labor to do that. The colonists were largely unsuccessful in their attempts to capture and enslave the native people of this land. They thus sought to bring servants from Britain to work the land. This strategy had its limitations—especially since these indentured servants secured their freedom after seven years (Zinn 2010). Historian Edmund Morgan imagines how the Virginia colonists may have felt in their quest to extract riches from the land.

> *If you were a colonist, you knew that your technology was superior to the Indians'. You knew that you were civilized, and they were savages... But your superior technology had proved insufficient to extract anything. The Indians, keeping to themselves, laughed at your superior methods and lived from the land more abundantly and with less labor than you did. ... And when your own people started deserting in order to live with them, it was too much. ... So you killed the Indians, tortured them, burned their villages, burned their cornfields. It proved your superiority, in spite of your failures. And you gave similar treatment to any of your own people who succumbed to their savage ways of life. But you still did not grow much corn. ...* (Morgan 1975)

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Spanish and Portuguese colonizers had brought a million enslaved Africans to colonies in South America and the Caribbean. The arrival of a ship with twenty to thirty Africans in Port Comfort, Virginia in 1619 marked the beginning of 250 years of barbaric chattel slavery that would meet the labor needs of the British colonists and ensure not only the financial success of the country yet to be born but, ironically, the freedom of White settlers (Hannah-

Jones 2019). It is also from this history of the enslavement of Africans and the genocide of Native Americans that a racial hierarchy was born. In the colonial Americas, no one would have described the population using the terms *Native American*, *White*, or *Black*. Instead, people identified themselves by groups such as Shawnee, Irish, and Ashanti. The categorizations that we use today were created as a result of this brutal history. Europeans did not enslave Africans because they were Black; instead Europeans created the idea that one race was Black and another White in order to justify the enslavement of Africans.

In the contemporary United States, one of the first things we notice about someone we meet is race. When we aren't sure of someone's race, we may get inquisitive or begin to feel uncomfortable (Dalmage 2000). It is as if, before interacting, we have to know if the other person is White, Black, Asian, Native American, or something else. The perceived race of the other person affects how we treat one another and what we expect the other person to say and do.

When people in the United States are unsure of someone's race, many feel compelled to ask: "What are you?"

It may be hard to imagine a time when the idea of race did not exist, when we did not categorize ourselves and others this way. But this time was not so long ago: although humans have long used various factors to classify one another, the idea of race as a classificatory system is a modern invention. Ancient Greeks and Romans, for example, did not think that the world's population could be divided into races (Eze 1997). Their system of social classification was much different from ours. Race is a modern **social construction**, meaning that the idea of race is not based on biological differences among people, even though race has become important in determining how we interact. It is a particular way of viewing human difference that is a product of colonial encounters.

Defining Race and Ethnicity

The word ***race*** refers to a group of people who share physical and cultural traits as well as a common ancestry. The idea of race implies that the people of the world can be divided into biologically discrete and exclusive groups based on physical and cultural traits. This idea is further linked to notions of White or European superiority that became concretized during the colonization of the Americas. ***Racism*** refers to both (1) the belief that races are populations whose physical differences are linked to significant cultural and social differences within a hierarchy, and (2) the practice of subordinating races believed to be inferior.

The idea of race is slightly different from the concept of ethnicity. Races are categories of people based on a hierarchical worldview that associates ancestry, descent, and appearance with cultural and moral attributes. **Ethnicities**, on the other hand, are group identities based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). Ethnicity also has a distinct historical trajectory from race. People self-identify as belonging to an ethnic group on the basis of a perceived shared history and a concomitant set of cultural attributes. In contrast to ethnicity, race is often an externally imposed category. In the United States, people are categorized into races based on socially constructed, ascribed characteristics often related to physical appearance, such as skin color or hair texture, regardless of self-identification. Sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (1997, 469) argues that "ethnicity has a primarily sociocultural foundation, and ethnic groups have exhibited tremendous malleability in terms of who belongs; racial ascriptions (initially) are imposed externally to justify the collective exploitation of a people and are maintained to preserve status differences."

Chapter 1.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

It's important to emphasize that race is a social construction, an idea we endow with meaning through daily interactions. It has no biological basis. Physical differences among people do not mean that the world can be divided into discrete racial groups. If you were to travel from Kenya to Sweden to China, you might note incremental gradations in physical differences among populations across space, but drawing a line would be difficult. There may be genetic differences between Kenyans and Swedes, for example, but the genetic variations within the Kenyan population are in fact greater than those between Swedes and Kenyans (Smedley 2007). Although race is a social, as opposed to a biological, construction, it has a wide range of consequences in our society, especially when used as a sorting and stratifying mechanism.

Race is also a **historical construction**, meaning the idea of race was formed in particular times and places. Of particular note in its development are the eras of **colonialism**—the practice of acquiring political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically—and slavery in the Americas. The idea of race involves classifying humans into distinct groups with particular cultural and moral traits. Through this classification, Europeans and their descendants have used the idea of race to justify exploitation, slavery, colonialism, and **genocide**, the mass killing of a group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic or racial group.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.1: Defining Race and Ethnicity

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Race: The Evolution of an Ideology

An **ideology** is a set of principles and ideas that benefits the dominant group. The racial ideologies that operate today reflect our times and are rooted in the history of the Americas. The way we understand the idea of race today is distinct from previous ways of thinking about human difference. Before the conquest of the Americas, there was no worldview that separated all of humanity into distinct races (Montagu 1997; Quijano 2000; Smedley 2007). Understanding what race means today requires delving into the historical process through which the idea of race was created. Once we understand that thinking of people as belonging to specific racial categories is not "natural" but constructed, we can begin to think about why and how these categories were created. As we will see, European thinkers created racial categories to justify mass genocide and widespread exploitation. This brutal history in turn raises the question of why we continue to use these categories.

Chapter 1.2 Video

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Historical Precedents to the Idea of Race

Until the sixteenth century, Northern Europeans had limited knowledge of the world beyond their immediate communities. Southern Europeans, in contrast, had much more contact with other peoples. Alexander the Great traveled to India in the fourth century BC, the Greeks established trade routes with Ethiopia in the third century BC, and Islamic peoples

conquered Spain in the eighth century AD. Yet this contact did not lead to a racial worldview. Ancient peoples did not divide the world into distinct races based on physical and cultural traits. Instead, Greeks had great respect for the achievements of Ethiopians (Snowden 1970), and Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived in reasonable harmony in Spain for hundreds of years (Smedley 2007).

Although the idea of race did not develop until later, these early interactions between Europeans and other groups did provide important precedents for current ways of conceptualizing human difference. The Spanish Inquisition is one example. When the Catholic Church began to consolidate its power in Spain under the reign of monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile (1479–1504), Jews were expelled from Spain, and converted Jews were subject to scrutiny. In 1480, Ferdinand and Isabella established a tribunal called the Spanish Inquisition, which was intended to ensure the orthodoxy of people who had converted from Judaism and Islam to Catholicism. The monarchs issued royal decrees in 1492 and 1501 that ordered Jews and Muslims to convert or leave the country. During the Inquisition, Jews and Muslims were obliged to convert, but conversion did not ensure their safety, as converts continued to be subject to scrutiny and suspicion. Moreover, people believed to be the descendants of Jews and Muslims also faced persecution. Discrimination against Jews and Muslims was more religious in nature than racial, yet the ideas regarding purity of blood that emerged set the stage for ideas of racial difference that were to become part of the European understanding of human differences (Quijano 2000; Smedley 2007).

Another crucial precedent to the idea of race is the English view of the Irish and later of Native Americans. England and Ireland were involved in centuries of conflict before the English first settled in North America, and English soldiers often portrayed the Irish as savage, sexually immoral, and resistant to civilizing forces. Many English colonists had been deployed to Ireland before settling in the New World. The ideas the English developed about the Irish may thus have played a role in settlers'

perception of Native Americans as savage (Allen 1994; Smedley 2007). This perception was a precursor to the racial idea that some humans were less fit for civilization than others.

Slavery before the Idea of Race

Slavery was not new or particular to the Americas: the practice of enslaving people has existed since antiquity. In African, European, and Middle Eastern societies, conquered peoples often became slaves in the aftermath of war. As agricultural societies grew, so did the demand for labor, leading peoples such as the Greeks and Phoenicians to raid other societies for slaves. Slavery existed not only across societies but also within societies: people lacking the support of a family often had no place other than as slaves, and some people became enslaved as a means of paying off a debt or as punishment for a crime. Slavery of this form almost always involved persons of the same ethnic group as their masters.

The prevalence of slavery in ancient societies does not imply that racism existed then as well. Although some ancient writings refer to skin color, these references are rarely derogatory and by no means represent the general ideology of any ancient society. On the contrary, Greeks and Romans held the Egyptians as well as the Ethiopians in high esteem and admired their culture and way of life. These ancient peoples developed no known stereotypes of Black people as primitives or lacking in culture (Snowden 1983). Marriages between Egyptians and Black Africans were commonplace in ancient times, and Muslim conquerors regarded anyone they succeeded in converting as brethren (Franklin 1974).

The status of slaves varied across societies. In some instances, slaves were adopted as kin after serving for a certain number of years; in other cases, slaves were permitted to marry and own property (Smedley 2007; Morgan 1975). Many slaves were granted rights not found in the system of slavery in the New World. These rights included access to education, the potential to obtain freedom for themselves and their children, the right to

marry, and the right to own property. Until the eighteenth century, no society categorically denied the humanity of slaves. It was not seen as necessary to rationalize slavery by denying that slaves were fully human. Although slaves were at times treated brutally, the humanity of slaves was never put into question, and slavery was never attributed to racial inferiority (Smedley 2007).

Although slavery was common in Ancient Greece, the idea of race did not yet exist.

European Encounters with Indigenous Peoples of the Americas

Before the arrival of European colonizers, the Americas were home to over 100 million indigenous people. As a result of warfare, slavery, and

disease, about 95 percent of this population was decimated during the first two centuries of colonization (Stannard 1993; At a Glance 1.1). The excerpted accounts in the Voices sidebar on p. 13 provide a small window into the depths of this massacre.

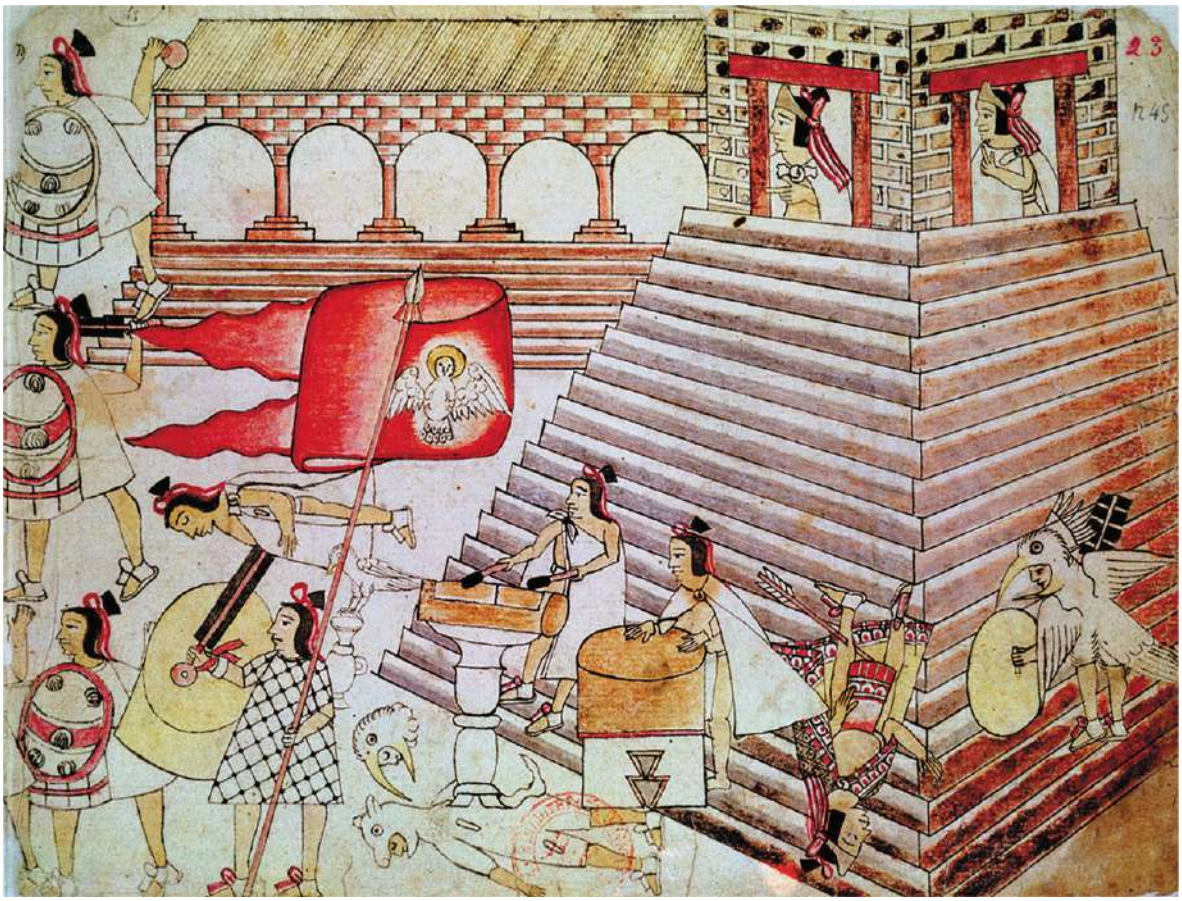
When Christopher Columbus encountered the native peoples of the Caribbean islands in 1492, he found them to be peaceable and generous. Despite the Spaniards' initial admiration for the indigenous people, the relations between the two groups soon deteriorated, as it became clear that the Spaniards' primary motive was to extract gold from the Americas. Intent upon taking as much gold as possible, the Spaniards used their weaponry to overpower and enslave the people indigenous to the Americas to compel them to find gold and silver for the Spaniards to take back to Spain (Todorov 1984). The abuse the Caribbean peoples suffered at the hands of the Spaniards was devastating: the Arawaks of Santo Domingo, for example, were reduced from over 3 million people in 1496 to a mere 125 in 1570 (Jones 2003).

When Christopher Columbus encountered the native peoples of the Caribbean, he found them to be peaceable and generous.

Reports of the Spaniards' extreme cruelty toward the indigenous people of the Americas made their way back to Spain and eventually became a subject of controversy. Fifty years after Columbus's arrival in the Caribbean islands, the enslavement of indigenous people was outlawed. The Spaniards continued to extract labor from indigenous people, however, by relying on other systems of forced labor (Wade 1997).

One of the most remarkable aspects of the conquest of the Americas is that many of the civilizations in the Americas were far more advanced than those from which the Europeans hailed. Europe in the sixteenth century was quite a ghastly place, with frequent famines and epidemic outbreaks of the plague and smallpox. Large cities were pestilent and dirty, with unsightly open sewers. Crime was rampant. Half of all children

died before they turned ten. Thus, we can imagine the surprise and awe that the magnificent city of Tenochtitlán engendered in the Spaniards who arrived there. Tenochtitlán, an Aztec city in central Mexico, had about 350,000 inhabitants—many times the population of London or Seville at the time. When the Spanish explorer and colonizer Hernando Cortés (1485–1547) saw this city, he declared it to be the most beautiful city on earth. His companion and chronicler Bernal Díaz (1492–1585) agreed, calling it a "wonderful thing to behold." Unlike European cities of the time, Tenochtitlán boasted clean streets, amazing floating gardens, a huge aqueduct system, and a market more extensive than any the Europeans had ever seen (Stannard 1993).



Tenochtitlán

Despite their admiration, the Spaniards did not preserve this city. The arrival of the Spaniards led to the destruction of not only this amazing

city, but also many towns and cities across the Americas. The population of central Mexico was decimated in less than a century, declining from 25 million in 1519 to barely 1.3 million in 1595. This pattern continued throughout the Americas, so that nearly 95 percent of the native populations were destroyed in less than 200 years (Stannard 1993).

Slavery and Colonization

Africans were present in the conquest of the Americas from the beginning, both as slaves and as sailors and explorers. Spain and Portugal were slaveholding societies long before Columbus set sail in search of the Indies. Many, but not all, of the slaves in Spain in the fifteenth century were Africans. Some African residents of Spain and Portugal—enslaved as well as free—accompanied Spaniards on their initial conquest voyages to the New World. Juan Garrido (*c.* 1480–*c.* 1547), for example, was born in Africa and later traveled to Portugal and then to Spain, where he joined an expedition to Santo Domingo. Juan Garrido also participated in the conquest of Puerto Rica, Cuba, and then Mexico. Juan García (*c.* 1495–date of death unknown), in contrast, was born in Spain as a free mulatto and traveled to Peru as a colonist (Restall 2000).

VOICES

The Spanish Treatment of Indigenous Peoples

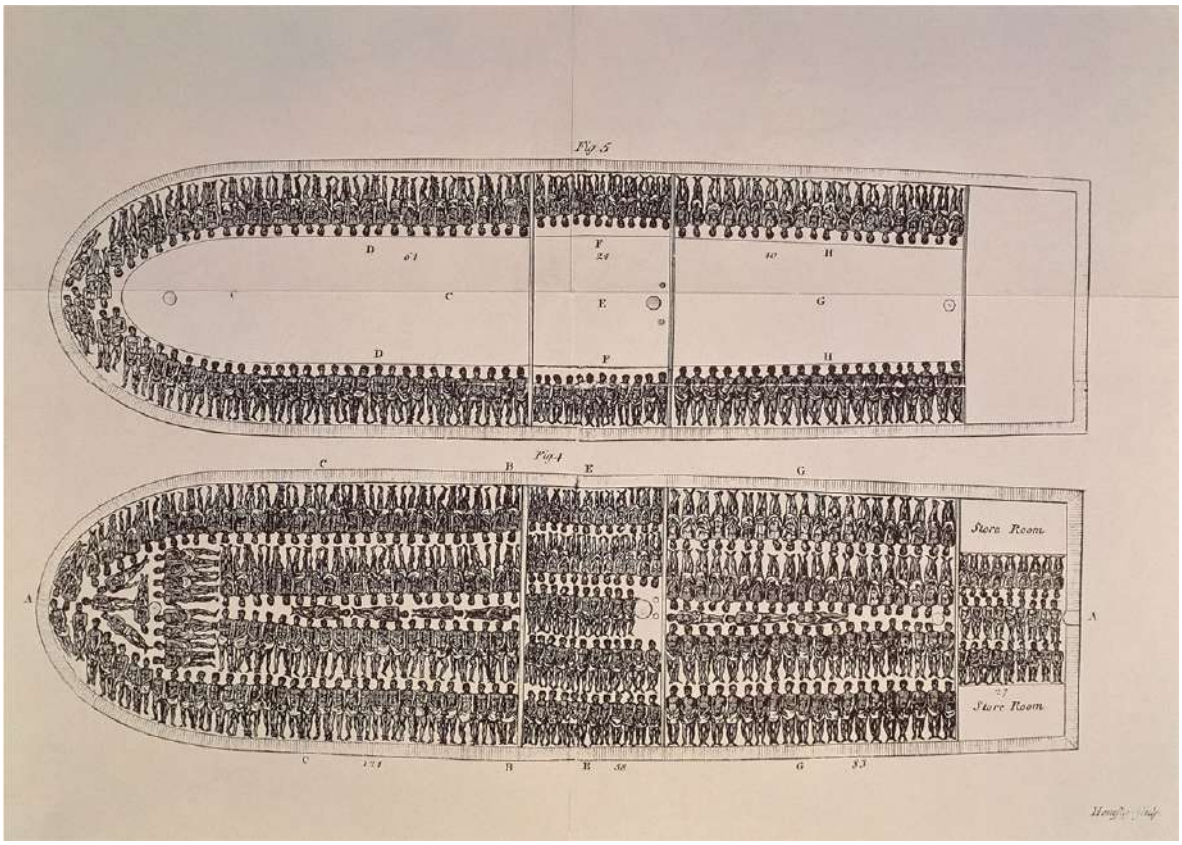
The following excerpts are from a 1519 report by the Dominican order about the Spanish treatment of indigenous peoples in the Carib Islands.

> Some Christians encounter an Indian woman, who was carrying in her arms a child at suck; and since the dog they had with them was hungry, they tore the child from the mother's arms and flung it still living to the dog, who proceeded to devour it before the mother's eyes.
>
> When there were among the prisoners some women who had recently given birth, if the new-born babes happened to cry, they seized them by the legs and hurled them against the rocks, or flung them into the jungle so that they would be certain to die there.
>
> Each of them [the foremen] had made it a practice to sleep with the Indian women who were in his workforce, if they pleased him, whether they were married women or maidens. While the foreman remained… with the Indian woman, he sent the husband to dig gold out of the mines; and in the evening, when the wretch returned, not only was he beaten or whipped because he had not brought enough gold, but further, most often, he was bound hand and foot and flung under the bed like a dog, before the foreman lay down, directly over him, with his wife.

Source: Todorov 1984, 139.

The Spanish colonists—often called *conquistadores*—endeavored to subdue native populations and to convert them into Catholics and subjects of the Spanish Crown. Their main goal, however, was to extract as much wealth as possible from the Americas. This extraction of wealth required labor, and the Spanish colonists enslaved the native populations to this end. The harsh conditions of this enslavement led to massive declines in the native populations, and in 1550, the Spanish Crown outlawed the practice, although it continued to allow other forms of forced labor. The ban on enslavement of indigenous people did not end the need for labor, and the Spaniards turned to Africa in their search for

workers. As they realized that agricultural exploitation, particularly the harvesting of sugarcane, could bring enormous wealth, they began to bring African slaves in very large numbers to their colonies in the Americas (Franklin 1974; Morgan 1975; Smedley 2007). The Spaniards and Portuguese had long been trading with Africans and thus could imagine the possibilities for slave trading with Africa. Notably, the Spaniards were well aware of the technological advances developed in Africa and did not seek Africans as slaves because they thought they were inferior. To the contrary, the Spaniards believed enslaved Africans would be a valuable asset. Consequently, tens of millions of Africans were brought over between the early 1600s and the nineteenth century as slaves (Bowser 1974).



Between ten and thirty million Africans were brought to the Americas on slave ships. Nearly a quarter of them died while at sea.

Whereas the Spaniards had had centuries of contact with Africans, the English who settled in North America had had no such contact until the arrival of twenty Africans in Jamestown in 1619. Enslaved people did not become an essential part of the workforce in North America until much later.

The form of slavery that eventually emerged in the North American colonies was unique in several ways. First, enslaved people had no human or legal rights. They were seen only as property, not as people who could marry or own property themselves. Second, slavery was permanent and the slave status was inherited. Third, enslaved people were forbidden to learn to read or write, thereby ensuring their inferior social status. Finally, slavery in North America was unique insofar as nearly all Africans and their descendants were enslaved, and only this group could be enslaved. This unique system of human exploitation laid the groundwork for a new idea of human difference (Smedley 2007). Before delving further into this point, let's take a closer look at the English settlements in North America.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Slave Flights and Runaway Communities in Colonial Angola

Slavery was common in Africa well before the transatlantic slave trade. And for as long as slavery existed, so did slave rebellions and runaway slave communities. Brazilian historian Roquinaldo Ferreira has studied these forms of resistance in colonial Angola, a country in southwestern Africa, focusing on the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

Ferreira argues that slave flight and the formation of runaway slave communities were frequent in Angola, which the Portuguese colonized in 1575. His work shows that these factors disrupted internal trade networks and impeded Portuguese plans to develop a plantation system there. Slaves played an important role in Angola's economy during this period, working in both urban and farm settings. Their resistance posed major problems for the Portuguese colonists.

Local resistance to slavery also posed a threat to the transatlantic slave trade. Angolan slaves feared being sent on ships to Brazil and would do whatever they could to avoid that fate, including running away. Angolan slaveowners were thus reluctant to sell into the transatlantic slave trade, fearing that the sale of one slave would cause others to flee.

Some runaway slaves were taken in by African rulers. For example, in 1805 a ruler named Caculo Cacahenda hired a runaway who was a scribe literate in Portuguese. The scribe helped his new employer correspond diplomatically and commercially with the Portuguese in Luanda, Angola's capital.

Runaway slaves sometimes joined together in communities called *quilombos* in Portuguese, some of which became large and powerful. One was led by a formerly enslaved person named Calumba, who commanded widespread respect from African rulers.

In a Portuguese military campaign against Calumba, sixty-four individuals were captured, which gives us an idea of how large his quilombo may have been. There were at least five quilombos in Angola in the 1820s, and the population of these communities may have been in the thousands.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Portuguese colonial government consistently tried to break these quilombos. They were unsuccessful, and in the late nineteenth century, the Luanda administration signed a treaty that allowed the quilombos' existence and promised to cease attacks on them.

For Discussion

1. What are some differences between the Angolan slave trade and the transatlantic slave trade?
2. Why do you think the Portuguese tried to break the quilombos?

Source: Ferreira 2014.

Exploitation in the Thirteen English Colonies

In the late fifteenth century, Europeans began to explore parts of North America where indigenous peoples had lived for thousands of years. The English, learning of the great wealth the Spanish had accrued in the New World, were anxious to fill their coffers with riches as well. England first sent colonists to Roanoke Island in the late sixteenth century, but that attempt at settlement failed. The first permanent English settlement was at Jamestown in 1607. Much as Columbus had recounted in 1492, these English settlers reported that the local Native Americans were kind and generous and helped them to survive the unfamiliar conditions. Amicable

trade relations did not last long, however, as it became clear that the Englishmen's intentions were not benign: they planned to take over indigenous land and resources (Morgan 1975; Zinn 2010).

Takeover of Indigenous Lands

European colonists engaged in constant warfare with Native Americans, often burning their lodging and crops and enslaving entire tribes. The English colonists justified their takeover of indigenous lands in religious terms. They interpreted their successes as God's will. For example, John Winthrop (1588–1649), a leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the mid-seventeenth century, wrote that the death of so many Native Americans as a result of smallpox showed that "the Lord hathe cleared our title to what we possess" (quoted in Wood 1991, 96). It is important to note that when the English colonists interacted with Native Americans, they did not see them as belonging to a separate race; this idea did not yet exist. Instead, the English saw themselves as superior in religious and moral terms. These religious justifications, however, laid the groundwork for racial distinctions that emerged later (Jordan 1968; Smedley 2007).

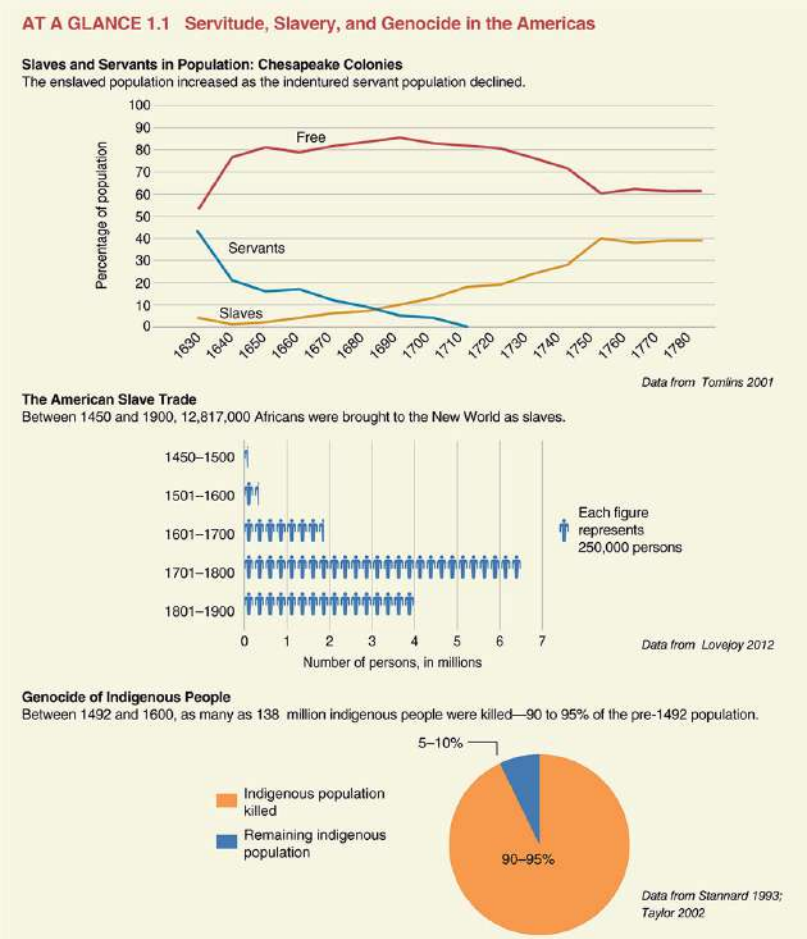
The first fifty years of the new settlement in Virginia were full of hardship. Disease, starvation, and war caused extremely high death rates among both Native Americans and English colonists. There were severe food shortages, partly because the first settlers did not plant enough corn. Morgan (1975) points out that most of the settlers in Virginia were not farmers but nobles or gentry who thought food cultivation beneath them. Although the settlers were too proud to grow corn to eat, they were willing to take up the enterprise of growing tobacco to sell and expected to make their riches in this manner. As there was no shortage of land in this vast country, the only commodity lacking was labor power (Zinn 2010).

The English colonists were notoriously successful at decimating the Native American population, yet less so in their attempts to use Native Americans for labor. When the English realized they would not become rich instantaneously through gold or silver mining, as it appeared the

Spaniards had done, they turned to agricultural production to seek wealth. For this, they needed labor—lots of it. The English were able to enslave Native Americans they captured in warfare, but most enslaved Native Americans either died or ran away, leaving the English in need of more labor in order to accumulate wealth (Zinn 2010).

Indentured Servitude

The lack of success at enslaving Native Americans led the colonists to turn to Britain, where they recruited poor men, women, and children from the streets of cities such as Liverpool and Bristol. Englishmen also rounded up Irish and Scottish peasants who had been conquered in warfare, banished, or released from prison. Indentured servants from Europe who were willing to work for four to seven years to pay off their passage and debt soon became the primary source of labor for the colonies (At a Glance 1.1). The harsh treatment of European indentured servants needed no justification, as servitude was a way of life in Britain at that time (Smedley 2007; Zinn 2010).


AT A GLANCE 1.1 Servitude, Slavery, and Genocide in the Americas
Slaves and Servants in Population: Chesapeake Colonies
The enslaved population increased as the indentured servant population declined.
Percentage of population
Free
Servants
Slaves
Data from Tomlins 2001
The American Slave Trade
Between 1450 and 1900, 12,817,000 Africans were brought to the New World as slaves.
1450–1500
1501–1600
1601–1700
1701–1800
1801–1900
Each figure represents 250,000 persons
Number of persons, in millions
Data from Lovejoy 2012
Genocide of Indigenous People
Between 1492 and 1600, as many as 138 million indigenous people were killed—90 to 95% of the pre-1492 population.
5–10%
Indigenous population killed
Remaining indigenous population
90–95%
Data from Stannard 1993; Taylor 2002

Throughout the seventeenth century, indentured servants endured harsh conditions as laborers in the colonies. Hopeful laborers continued to come to the Americas, despite the difficult circumstances, because there were possibilities for social and economic advancement in North America that did not exist in England. The flow of English laborers began to decline, however, with the restoration of the monarchy in England in 1660, as King Charles II implemented policies that discouraged emigration (Smedley 2007).

The Enslavement of Africans

In addition to bringing English laborers, colonists brought Africans to the colonies as slaves (At a Glance 1.1). Most African slaves brought to North America were from West Africa and were Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, or Mada. In 1619, English colonists brought the first group of Africans to the North

American colonies. These twenty Africans occupied nearly the same social status as European indentured servants and were soon joined by African slaves brought over by Dutch and Spanish slave ships. All of these early Africans were granted rights that were later denied to all Black people in Virginia. There is no evidence that African slaves during the period before 1660 were subjected to more severe disciplinary measures than European servants. Some slaves were allowed to earn money of their own and to buy their freedom with it. There are several cases recorded in which masters set up conditions in their wills whereby Negro slaves would become free or could purchase their freedom after the master's death. The terms of these wills imply that the freed slaves would become regular members of the community (Morgan 1975; Smedley 2007; Zinn 2010).

The enslavement of Africans turned out to be particularly profitable in part because Africans brought with them agricultural and craft experience. In addition, unlike people indigenous to the Americas, Africans had immunities to Old World diseases and thus could live longer in slavery. The initial justifications for bringing Africans to the colonies were not racial in nature. At the time, slavery was an accepted social system. To the extent that a justification was offered, it was that Africans were heathens and their enslavement would ensure their salvation (Smedley 2007). Over time, racial justifications for the enslavement of Africans emerged.

The American Slave Trade

1492	1619	1660	1676	1863	1865
Christopher Columbus lands in the Caribbean	First African slaves arrive in Jamestown	First slave codes enacted	Bacon's Rebellion	Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation	Slavery is abolished in the United States

The Legal Codification of Racial Differences

Slave codes of the 1660s spelled out the legal differences between African slaves and European indentured servants. In 1667, Virginia issued a decree that slaves who had converted to Christianity could continue to be enslaved because of their so-called heathen ancestry. Whereas earlier justifications for slavery were primarily religious, the idea that ancestry could be used to determine social status set the stage for the development of the idea of race. In the late seventeenth century, Virginia and Maryland each passed a series of laws that solidified the status of Black people. The strongest indicator of the solidification of the status of Africans was the prohibition of manumission: masters were not allowed to free their slaves, thereby establishing a permanent slave class. Other laws established lifelong servitude, forbade interracial marriage, and limited the rights of Black people to own property and bear arms. These laws specific to Black people both reflected the social order and solidified the status quo. For most of the seventeenth century, European indentured servants and African slaves had shared a similar social status. The slave codes gradually changed this social classification.

Laws against Intermarriage

The shared social position of African and European servants and slaves in the early years of the colonies meant that these groups intermarried and fraternized. The fact that Africans and Europeans had amicable relations can be seen in the laws passed that forbade these relationships. In 1661, Virginia passed a law that imposed harsh conditions on English servants who ran away with African slaves. In 1691, Virginia passed another law that prohibited free White people from intermarrying with Black people and Native Americans. Had these groups been naturally disinclined to intermarry or to fraternize, these laws would not have been necessary. As the 1661 law shows, plantation owners were concerned that European

indentured servants and African slaves would see that they shared a common interest in fighting for more rights and better conditions. As historian Howard Zinn puts it, “only one fear was greater than the fear of Black rebellion in the new American colonies. That was the fear that discontented White people would join Black slaves to overthrow the existing order” (2010, 37).

When Africans and Europeans first found themselves together in the Americas, sexual relations and even marriage between these two groups were not uncommon. African men and women married European men and women (Smedley 2007). Various laws were passed, however, both to prevent and to control these relationships. The aforementioned 1662 law made it clear that when African women had children, the child’s status as slave or free would be in accordance with the condition of the mother. The law also indicated that when Christians—here meaning Europeans—had sexual relations with Africans, they would pay double the normal fine for adultery. The European men who wrote these laws perceived it to be important to prevent sexual relations between Europeans and Africans and to ensure that the children of enslaved African women would also be slaves. This law effectively prevented the formation of families by enslaved African women and European men.

Bacon’s Rebellion

Bacon’s Rebellion, which occurred in September 1676, provides one example of what could happen when Black and White people joined forces to fight for their interests. The rebellion itself was not particularly successful, but the coalition that emerged between poor White people and African slaves and freedmen became a cause for concern among the elite planter class, who depended on these groups for cheap labor. In Bacon’s Rebellion, White indentured servants joined forces with enslaved Africans and freedmen to protest their conditions. This massive rebellion, in which protestors demanding an end to their servitude burned Jamestown to the ground, was a clear threat to the status quo. One of the last groups to

surrender was a mixed group of eighty Black and twenty White servants. This multiracial coalition indicates that Black and White people were willing to join forces to fight for their common interests as laborers. After Bacon's Rebellion, an official report arguing for the continued presence of British soldiers in Virginia stated: "Virginia is at present poor and more populous than ever. There is great apprehension of a rising among the servants, owing to their great necessities and want of clothes; they may plunder the storehouses and ships" (Zinn 2010, 37).

In Bacon's Rebellion, White indentured servants joined forces with enslaved Africans to protest their conditions.

Howard Zinn and other historians argue that Bacon's Rebellion stirred up fear in the hearts of the elite planter class and that this fear led these elites to pass laws that worked to divide Black and White people. For

example, in the aftermath of the rebellion, the Virginia Assembly gave amnesty to the White servants who had rebelled but not to the Black servants. By extending this and other privileges to White people that were denied to Black people, the elites succeeded in preventing future class-based alliances between Black and White people that would threaten the social order.

Wealth Imbalance and the Tenuous Social Order

Wealth in colonial North America was concentrated in the hands of very few people. In 1700, there were about 250,000 colonists, most of whom lived in horrendous conditions. In Virginia, there were only about fifty wealthy families, who depended on the labor of the other 40,000 poor colonists. This imbalance of wealth made for a tenuous social order (Zinn 2010). It soon became clear to the rich elite and the governing body that they could not continue to disregard the interests of the majority of the population. In 1705, a law was passed requiring masters to provide White servants whose indenture time was completed with ten bushels of corn, thirty shillings, a gun, and fifty acres of land (Morgan 1975, 344). This tactic of giving servants a piece of the American Dream was intended to avoid rebellion by convincing poor White people that the rich landowners were not extortionists or enemies, but protectors of their common interests. To reinforce this impression, it was further mandated that servants had the right to possess property but that slaves did not (Morgan 1975, 333). The Virginia Assembly in 1705 also prohibited any Negro, mulatto, or Indian from raising his hand in opposition to any Christian, which meant any White man (Jordan 1968). By denying Black slaves privileges extended to White servants, the first step was taken in creating a division between Black and White people (Zinn 2010).

In New York in 1708, a group of slaves was accused of murdering a farmer and his family. Shortly afterward, a law was enacted preventing the conspiracy of slaves. This meant, in effect, that slaves could not gather in private to talk about anything. In 1712, a slave rebellion involving about

fifty slaves left nine White people dead and six others wounded. Immediately thereafter, New York's repressive laws were reinforced. For example, arson committed by a slave was made into a crime punishable by death (Szasz 1967).

One purpose of the slave codes was the prevention and deterrence of slave rebellions, which were becoming more and more of a real danger with the increasing number of slaves, especially in the southern colonies, where slaves often outnumbered White people. In 1730, in Virginia, the governor ordered that all White people should bring their guns with them to church on Sunday so that they would be prepared for a slave uprising in the event that slaves took advantage of their absence to conspire (Jordan 1968). The idea of a slave rebellion was even more distasteful to White people because of the widespread idea that any slave insurrection would have as its ultimate goal not only the emancipation of slaves but also the dominance of Black people over White people (Jordan 1968).

Solidifying the Idea of Race

Eventually, the entire slave class was composed of Black Africans, and, as a result of manumission restrictions, most Black people were enslaved. The creation of this sort of color line, alongside the introduction of the concept of hereditary slavery, was an important step toward solidifying the idea of race. Notably, it was not until the eighteenth century that negative beliefs about Africans became widespread among the English settlers. Even then, there is ample evidence that Black people and White people continued to fraternize. In 1743, a grand jury in Charleston, South Carolina, denounced "The Too Common Practice of Criminal Conversation with Negro and other Slave Wenches in this Province" (Zinn 2010).

VOICES

From *Bullwhip Days*

> My mother's mistress had three boys—one twenty-one, one nineteen, and one seventeen. One day, Old Mistress had gone away to spend the day. Mother always worked in the house; she didn't work on the farm, in Missouri. While she was alone, the boys came in and threw her down on the floor and tied her down so she couldn't struggle, and one after the other used her as long as they wanted, for the whole afternoon. Mother was sick when her mistress came home. When Old Mistress wanted to know what was the matter with her, she told her what the boys had done. She whipped them, and that's the way I came to be here.
>
> *—Mary Peters describing the brutal circumstances of her own conception*

> I saw slaves sold. I can see that old block now. My cousin Eliza was a pretty girl, really good-looking. Her master was her father. … The day they sold her will always be remembered. They stripped her to be bid off and looked at. … The man that bought Eliza was from New York. The Negroes had made up 'nuf money to buy her off theyself, but the White folks wouldn't let that happen. There was a man bidding for her that was a Swedeland. He allus bid for the good-looking cullud gals and bought 'em for his own use. He ask the man from New York "What you gonna do with 'er when you git 'er?" The man from New York said, "None of your damn business, but you ain't got money 'nuf to buy 'er."
>
> *—Former slave Daniel Dowdy*

Source: Mellon 2002, 297; 287.

The stories of Mary Peters and Daniel Dowdy (Voices: From *Bullwhip Days*) elucidate the cruelty and dehumanization that were part and parcel of colonialism and enslavement in the Americas. These two phenomena—colonialism and slavery—have left a strong mark on the way people in the United States view the world. Our contemporary racial worldview is a relic of the systems of human classification that were first used in the context of the colonization of Native American territories and the enslavement of Africans in the Americas. Although such brutal practices are no longer morally or legally permissible, the ideas of racial difference that emerged from those practices persist.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.2: Race: The Evolution of an Ideology

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Slavery Versus the Ideal of Freedom in the United States

The Declaration of Independence famously begins by stating that all men are created equal. The question was, then, why were some enslaved? Although the concept of liberty was at the core of the American Revolution, nearly half of the fifty-five men who made up the 1787 Constitutional Convention owned slaves, and most of the rest profited from slavery through their business practices. A prominent member, George Washington (1732–1799), was one of the richest men in the colonies and the owner of many slaves. These men struggled with the contradictions inherent in advocating for freedom in a slaveholding society, yet they were unwilling to outlaw slavery (Feagin 2001).

The writers of the founding documents of the United States were not willing to end slavery in part because most of them profited directly or indirectly from it. The wealth generated by slave labor in the United States had made the American Revolution possible: a significant amount of the funds that financed the American Revolution came from profits from slavery (Feagin 2001). The contradiction between the ideals of freedom and the prevalence of slavery led to justifications of slavery in terms of Black people's alleged racial inferiority. Writings by people such as Thomas Jefferson validated the belief that people of African descent were less than human. In 1787, Thomas Jefferson wrote in *Notes on Virginia*: "Blacks, whether originally a distinct race or made distinct by time and circumstance, are inferior to White people in the endowment both of body and mind" (Jefferson [1787] 2004, 98–99).

Slavery was an immensely profitable enterprise for a small number of slaveholders. In 1860, the twelve wealthiest counties in the United States could all be found in the Deep South. The profits were not evenly divided,

however: about 7 percent of Southerners owned three-quarters of the four million slaves in the South. This concentration of wealth meant that slaveowners constituted a powerful planter class that went to great lengths to protect its property, which included humans: slaveowners saw enslaved Africans and African Americans as an investment they did not want to lose. Additionally, many White people who did not own slaves profited indirectly from the slave system. In the southern United States, slavery was part of the economic and social fabric of society. There were fewer slaves in the northern states, but many Northerners had strong economic ties to slavery insofar as they consumed and manufactured products made on slave plantations. These strong economic interests in slavery meant that the practice was not ended in the United States until the victory of the North in the Civil War (Wilson 1996; Feagin 2001).

GLOBAL VIEW

The Idea of Race in Latin American Nation-Making

Contradictions surrounding racial ideologies are not unique to the United States. During the nineteenth century, Latin American countries sought their independence from colonial rule. As in the United States, such calls for political freedom seemed at odds with these nations' long histories of slavery and servitude.

From 1870 to 1940, Latin American countries were engaged in nation-making. That is, Latin American intellectual and political elites attempted to build national unity for their fledgling nations (Knight 1990). In this process, they endeavored to prove that their countries were modern nations with a unique identity. They had to contend, however, with European scholars who viewed them as racially degenerate (Stepan 1991). Many European scholars looked down on Latin America, which they perceived as having high levels of racial mixture and a relatively small number of White people.

Latin Americans countered European intellectuals' impression of them with claims that racial mixture (*mestizaje*) would lead to progress. Latin American intellectuals argued that racial mixture was not only beneficial but also the hallmark of Latin American nations. According to this logic, the mixture of Iberians (those of Spanish or Portuguese descent) with other races was what made countries such as Mexico, Cuba, and Brazil great nations. Although Latin Americans developed their own brand of racial ideology, they did not reject the belief that Whiteness was superior. Instead, they expanded the idea of Whiteness to include racially and culturally mixed people in order to accommodate their own realities. Faced with different racial demographics, Latin American intellectuals developed racial and national discourses that suited their countries. A consideration of Latin American racial ideologies and discourses reveals that ideas of White superiority come in many forms.

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the slaves held in the rebel states of the Confederacy. His willingness to issue this proclamation was not hindered by his belief that Black people were inferior to White people. Five years earlier, in 1858, Lincoln had declared: "I am not nor ever have been in favor of the social and political equality of the White and Black races: that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters of the free negroes, or jurors, or qualifying them to hold office or having them to marry with White people. … I as much as any other man am in favor of the superior position being assigned to the White man" (quoted in Feagin 2001, 83–84).

In 1865, the United States finally abolished slavery. Slavery was one of the main reasons for the long and bloody Civil War that had pitted the North against the South. From the perspective of plantation owners in the South, slavery was a profitable institution that ensured the proper place of Black people in society. From the perspective of capitalists in the North, slavery gave southern capitalists an unfair competitive advantage (Feagin 2001). The end of slavery marked the end of an era of extreme exploitation. The racist ideologies that had justified the enslavement of Africans and the massacre and removal of Native Americans, however, would endure.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.3: Slavery versus the Ideal of Freedom in the United States

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The Indian Removal Act: The Continuation of Manifest Destiny

The **Indian Removal Act of 1830** enabled the administration of President Andrew Jackson to use military power to displace at least 70,000 Native Americans, killing tens of thousands in the process. Indian removal is often associated with the Cherokee of Georgia, but there were actually many more "**Trails of Tears**," including the forced displacement of the Apalachicola of Florida, the Peoria of Illinois, the Shawnee of Ohio, and a host of other tribes (Littlefield and Parins 2011). These removals violated treaties the United States had made with Native Americans, even though the Indian Removal Act contained a clause guaranteeing that "nothing in this act contained shall be construed as authorizing or directing the violation of any existing treaty between the United States and any of the Indian tribes" (quoted in Cave 2003, 1335). These forced displacements, which continued until 1859, when the Seminoles were removed from Florida, wreaked havoc on Native American communities (Littlefield and Parins 2011).

During these treacherous journeys, tens of thousands of Native Americans died from disease, cold, starvation, and exhaustion. Approximately 17,000 Cherokee were forcibly removed, and nearly half of those who embarked on the Trail of Tears died in the process. Large numbers of Native Americans died in other removals: about 6,000 of the 40,000 Choctaw did not survive the journey, and only about half of the Creek and the Seminole peoples survived their removals (Churchill 2002).

The justifications for Indian removal were distinct from those used for slavery, as White people tended to see Africans as a vital source of labor. Native Americans, in contrast, were construed as hindering White

expansion, and thus the racial ideologies surrounding Native Americans tended to explain and predict their gradual extinction. Notably, this extinction was imagined as occurring through both assimilation (marriage to White people) and natural selection (death from disease). Whereas colonists' ideas about Africans served to justify their hyperexploitation of slaves, White people's ideas about Native Americans aimed to justify the assimilation and gradual extinction of these groups, enabling White people to appropriate Indian lands (Berger 2009).

Under President Jackson's administration, tens of thousands of Native Americans died as a result of forced displacements known as the Trail of Tears.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.4: The Indian Removal Act: The Continuation of Manifest

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The Rise of Science and the Question of Human Difference

In the seventeenth century, people in the Americas developed and acted on folk ideas about differences among Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans that were based on daily interactions and the prevailing social order. The slow emergence of the idea of racial difference can be seen in the laws passed and the decisions made by religious leaders. However, the rise of science in the eighteenth century would fundamentally alter this conversation. The question of human difference began to move from the realms of religion and folk ideas to that of science.

European Taxonomies

Before the rise of science, Westerners understood the world primarily in biblical terms. Theology provided explanations for nearly everything. Thus, when Europeans encountered the Americas, they attempted to place these peoples into their understanding of the history of the world, as described in their scriptures. This led to debates over which of the three sons of Noah was the ancestor of the Native Americans and even over whether Native Americans were fully human. The strong belief in the biblical scriptures carried over into scientific thought, which became the central arena for shaping understandings of race (Smedley 2007).

One of the key features of the rise of science was the emergence of taxonomy. Scholars endeavored to classify all flora and fauna known to them. Soon, scientists began to attempt to classify human beings into types. One of the first efforts to develop a classificatory system for humans appeared in a French journal in 1684. The author, François

Bernier (1625–1688), divided humans into four groups: Europeans, Far Easterners, Negroes, and Lapps (people from Lapland in northern Scandinavia). His system used physical traits such as skin color and hair texture, which would later become prominent determinants of racial status, to categorize different groups. Other scholars worked on developing classificatory schemes, but it was not until 1735 that we begin to see the development of a comprehensive system of classification that resembles the modern concept of race (Eze 1997).

In 1735, the Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus (1707–1778) proposed that all human beings could be divided into four groups. These four groups are consistent with the modern idea of race in two ways: all of them are still used today, and Linnaeus connected physical traits such as skin color with cultural and moral traits such as "indolence." Linnaeus described these four groups, which correspond to four of the continents, in *Systemae Naturae* in 1735:

> *Americanus:* reddish, choleric,... obstinate, merry, free;... regulated by customs.
>
> *Asiaticus:* sallow, melancholy,... Black hair, dark eyes,... haughty,... ruled by opinions.
>
> *Africanus:* Black, phlegmatic, relaxed; women without shame,... crafty, indolent, negligent; governed by caprice.
>
> *Europaenus:* White, sanguine, muscular; inventive; governed by laws.

Other European men elaborated on this schema. For example, Johann Blumenbach (1752–1840), a German professor of medicine, proposed a classificatory system that divided humans into five varieties that also were associated with geographical origins: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay. Both Blumenbach and Linnaeus endowed Europeans—their own group—with the most admirable qualities. It bears repeating that the idea of race was initiated by European men and that, not surprisingly, consistently has been used to explain and justify

European superiority. The Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711–1776), for example, asserted in 1748 that White people were the only "species" to have created civilized nations and to have developed arts and sciences. European explanations of White racial superiority espoused by Blumenbach, Linnaeus, and Hume soon reached the Americas, where they were used to explain and justify the enslavement of Africans and the continued takeover of indigenous lands (Eze 1997).

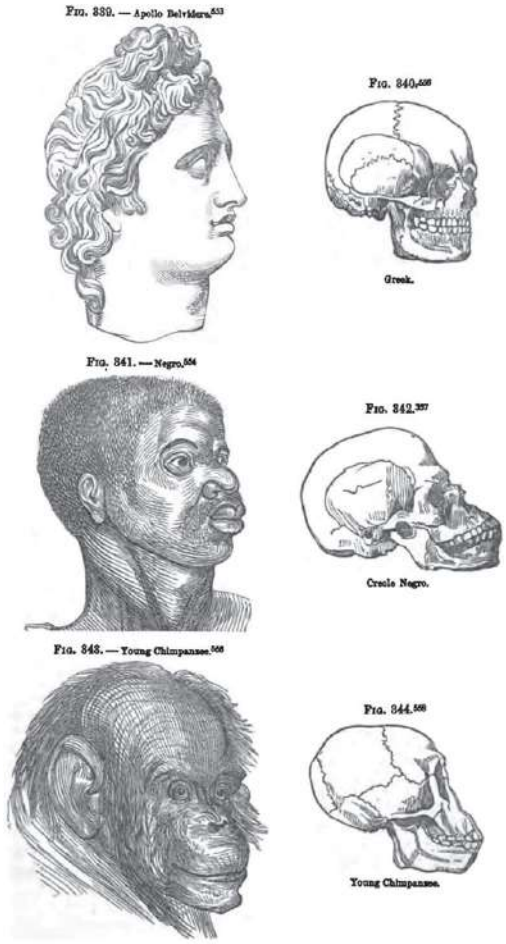
Scientific Racism in the Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century was an age of emancipation from slavery and liberation from colonial powers. It also saw the rise of industrial capitalism and the emergence of **scientific racism**—the use of science or pseudoscience to justify or reproduce racial inequality. For intellectuals in the Americas and Europe, scientific racism was central to most human and social inquiries. Eighteenth-century scientists had developed elaborate systems of human classification. In the nineteenth century, scientists built on these classification systems by developing anthropometrics—tools designed to measure the qualities of humans.

With the publication between 1853 and 1855 of Comte Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau's four volumes entitled *Essays on the Inequality of the Human Races*, it is safe to say that by the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of race was fully in place. Gobineau (1816–1882) divided humanity into three races—White, yellow, and Black—and argued that racial differences allow us to explain fundamental differences among people. Gobineau's thinking was in line with that of Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), who contended that the superiority of the European race explained its dominant position. He pointed to the natural inferiority of Native Americans as an explanation for their decimation. Spencer's ideas of the "survival of the fittest" would hold great sway for many years to come. Both Spencer and Gobineau used ideas and rudimentary evidence from travel accounts to

make their claims. Other scientists, however, were developing anthropometric techniques that enabled them to measure differences between people (Gould 1996).

Samuel George Morton (1799–1851), a scientist and physician who worked in Philadelphia, amassed an impressive collection of human skulls. He began his collection in the 1820s, and by the time of his death in 1851 he had over 1,000 skulls. Morton used these skulls to test his hypothesis that brain size could be used to rank the various human races. In his initial efforts to measure brain size, Morton filled the cranial cavity with mustard seed. Later, when he realized that mustard seed did not provide consistent measurements, he switched to lead shots with a one-eighth-inch diameter that produced less variable results. Using both mustard seeds and lead shots, Morton's measurements consistently showed that Europeans had larger brains than Africans or American Indians. In 1977, evolutionary biologist and scientific historian Stephen Jay Gould reanalyzed Morton's raw data and found several examples of unconscious bias in his work (Gould 1996).



A racist illustration from Josiah Clark Nott and George Robert Gliddon's *Indigenous Races of the Earth* (1857), showing perceived distinctions between the White man, the Black man, and the chimpanzee.

Morton found that American Indians had the smallest skull sizes. Gould explains that Morton arrived at this conclusion because he had included 155 skulls of Peruvian Incas, who had an average brain size of seventy-five cubic inches, yet he only included three skulls of Iroquois people, who had, on average, a much larger skull size. In contrast, in the Caucasian group, Morton eliminated the Hindus, who had the smallest skulls, from his sample. Had Morton ensured equal representation from each of the American Indian and Caucasian groups, he would have found no significant differences in skull size.

Stephen Gould explains that skull size is related to body size, and yet he contends that Morton never took body size into account when he

measured skulls. As women tend to be smaller than men, women often have smaller skulls. When Morton compared the brain sizes of Africans and Europeans, his African sample was entirely female and his English sample entirely male. Of course, he found that Europeans had larger brains. What is remarkable about Morton's research is not just that it is full of unconscious bias, but also that his biases are consistently in favor of his expectations. Morton set out to prove, through science, that Europeans were superior. All of his miscalculations turned out in favor of his hypothesis. In this sense, Morton was similar to nearly all of his contemporaries: European and American male scientists of the nineteenth century developed a plethora of methods to measure human abilities and consistently found that White men were superior to all other groups.

Paul Broca (1824–1880), a French anthropologist, built on the work of Samuel Morton to develop more elaborate techniques to measure humans. Broca believed strongly that there was a direct correlation between brain size and intelligence, and he spent much of his career measuring the brains of dead people. Broca eventually ran into trouble with his arguments when he discovered, by measuring the brains of eminent scholars who had passed on, that many people considered to be highly intelligent turned out to have small brains. Broca, however, accounted for those anomalies by asserting that they died very old or that their brains had not been properly preserved. When a study of criminal brains revealed that criminals had abnormally large brains, Broca argued that their sudden death by execution meant that their brains did not atrophy, as did those of people who died of natural causes. Broca eventually went on to measure other characteristics of brains and bodies; however, his scientific measurements always showed what he set out to prove: that Europeans were superior to other groups (Gould 1996).

Ideas of European racial superiority emerged during a time when colonists were advocating radical ideas of freedom for themselves. Justifications for Indian removal often were couched in terms of perceived lack of civilization: Native Americans would not make as good

use of the land as White people would and thus did not deserve to live on the land. The supposed natural inferiority of Africans began to be used as a justification for slavery. In the late eighteenth century, Americans such as Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) grappled with a fundamental contradiction: they were advocating for liberty, justice, and the rights of men at the same time that they depended on African slavery.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.5: The Rise of Science and the Question of Human Difference

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Conclusion and Discussion

The brutal, troubled history of the idea of race clearly demonstrates the power of ideologies about human difference. The idea that the world's population can be divided into discrete racial groups is a product of a specific series of events: colonialism, slavery, and the rise of science. Because Europeans wished to take land from indigenous peoples in the Americas and to extract labor from Africans, they developed ideologies of inferiority as justification.

Alongside this large-scale theft of land and exploitation of labor, science began to emerge as a field of study concerned largely with the classification of all objects and species into specific groups. Scientists rushed to develop taxonomies of flora and fauna, including classifications of humans. Europeans who proposed these classifications put their own group at the top of the hierarchy.

This subjective (and overt) bias of Europeans continued with the development of anthropometric and other measurement techniques in the nineteenth century. European scientists measured human skulls, brains, and many other parts of the human body and arrived at the same conclusion: Europeans were superior. This recounting of history offers a revealing look at not only the past but also the present. We cannot simply look at the past and point fingers at those "racists" of yesteryear. Instead, we should also be compelled to explore the assumptions and ideologies that govern our behavior today.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.6: Conclusion and Discussion

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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1.1 What are race and ethnicity? What is racism?

- *Race* refers to a group of people who share physical and cultural traits as well as a common ancestry. It is a social construction and has no biological basis.
- *Ethnicity* refers to a group identity based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship.
- *Racism* refers to the belief that some races are superior to others, as well as the practice of subordinating races believed to be inferior.

Review

» Why do sociologists argue that race is a social and historical construction?

Critical Thinking

» Why is it important to understand that the idea of race is a modern invention?

1.2 How old is racism? How is race distinct from previous ways of thinking about human difference?

- There are historical precedents to the idea of race, including the Spanish Inquisition and the subjugation of the Irish by the English.
- Slavery existed long before the invention of the idea of race.

- When the Spanish colonists arrived in the Americas, they displayed extreme cruelty to the native people of the Americas.
- African slaves were brought to the Americas to meet labor needs.
- The idea of race emerged to justify slavery and colonization.

Review

» When was the idea of race invented?

Critical Thinking

» Can you imagine a world in which racial classifications had no importance? Why or why not?

1.3 How did the writers of the U.S. Constitution think of slavery?

- Although the Declaration of Independence states that “all men are created equal,” nearly half of the authors were slaveowners.
- Slavery was not abolished in the United States until 1865.

Review

» Why were slavery and freedom in tension during the writing of the Declaration of Independence?

Critical Thinking

» What are today’s prevailing racial ideologies in the United States?

» In what ways do those ideologies work to justify the current racial hierarchy?

1.4 How did the Indian Removal Act affect Native Americans?

- The Indian Removal Act of 1830 resulted in the death of tens of thousands of Native Americans due to forced displacements.

Review

» How were the justifications for Indian Removal distinct from those used for slavery?

Critical Thinking

» How and why do racial ideologies related to Native Americans and African Americans differ?

1.5 What role did science play in the propagation of racism?

- From simple classification schemes to more complex endeavors, bias has affected scientific attempts to explain differences among racial groups.

Review

» How did the unconscious bias of nineteenth-century scientists influence their measurements of various racial groups?

Critical Thinking

» What biases toward race might be present in today's sciences and social sciences?

Talking about Race

Imagine someone said to you that African Americans are naturally gifted at basketball. How could you respond in a constructive way to such a statement? The first step is to ask for further explanation. Listen to any evidence provided to support the claim. You should be able to draw from the knowledge you gained in this chapter to respond to the contention that there are natural or genetic differences between racial groups. Use your sociological imagination to encourage your conversational partner to think of explanations other than genetics for racial differences in basketball skills.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.7: Check Your Understanding

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LIST OF KEY TERMS

colonialism

Ethnicities

genocide

historical construction

ideology

Indian Removal Act of 1830

race

Racism

scientific racism

Slave codes

social construction

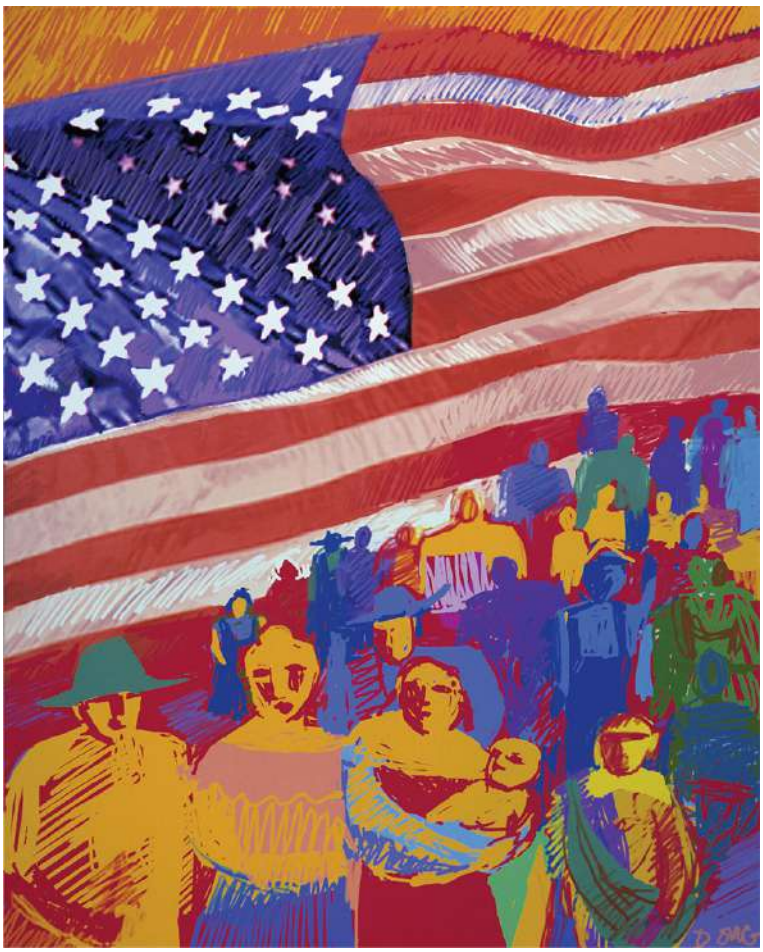
Trails of Tears

2

Race, Immigration, and Citizenship

from the 1840s to the 1920s

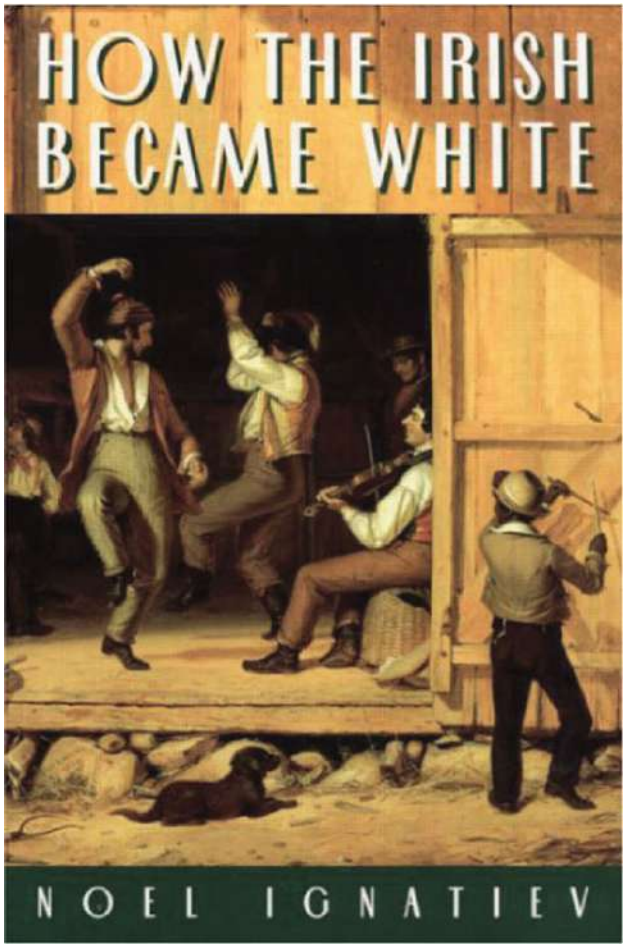
Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced



America 1985. Diana Ong. (*Diana Ong/SuperStock*)

As You Read

- **2.1** How did scientific racism evolve over the twentieth century?
- **2.2** How did scientific racism influence immigration and citizenship policies?
- **2.3** How did legal decisions shape racial categories?
- **2.4** Where did European immigrants fit into the racial hierarchy in the United States?
- **2.5** What forms of structural violence did Native Americans and African Americans confront in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?



When the Irish left Ireland for the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they did not think of themselves as White, or even as European. In the new country, however, they encountered a divide between White and Black, and they found it was best to be on the White side of that divide. In this excerpt from *How the Irish Became White*, historian Noel Ignatiev reflects on their experience.

The Irish who emigrated to America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were fleeing caste oppression and a system of landlordism that made the material conditions of the Irish peasant comparable to those of an American slave. They came to a society in which color was important in determining social position. It was not a pattern they were familiar with and they bore no responsibility for it; nevertheless, they adapted to it in short order.

When they first began arriving here in large numbers they were, in the words of Mr. Dooley [a fictional Irish immigrant bartender created by journalist Finley Peter Dunne], given a shovel and told to start digging up the place as if they owned it. On the rail beds and canals they labored for low wages under dangerous conditions; in the South they were occasionally employed where it did not make sense to risk the life of a slave. As they came to the cities, they were crowded into districts that became centers of crime, vice, and disease.

There they commonly found themselves thrown together with free Negroes. Irish- and Afro-Americans fought each other and the police, socialized and occasionally intermarried, and developed a common culture of the lowly. They also both suffered the scorn of those better situated. Along with Jim Crow and Jim Dandy, the drunken, belligerent, and foolish Pat and Bridget were stock characters on the early stage. In antebellum America, it was speculated that if racial amalgamation was ever to take place it would begin between those two groups.

As we know, things turned out otherwise. The outcome was not the inevitable consequence of blind historic forces, still less of biology, but the result of choices made, by the Irish and others, from among available alternatives. To enter the White race was a strategy to secure an advantage in a competitive society.

What did it mean to the Irish to become White in America? It did not mean that they all became rich, or even “middle-class” (however that is defined); to this day there are plenty of poor Irish. Nor did it mean that they all became the social equals of the Saltonstalls and van Rensselaers; even the marriage of Grace Kelly to the Prince of Monaco and the election of John F. Kennedy as president did not eliminate all barriers to Irish entry into certain exclusive

> circles. To Irish laborers, to become White meant at first that they could sell themselves piecemeal instead of being sold for life, and later that they could compete for jobs in all spheres instead of being confined to certain work; to Irish entrepreneurs, it meant that they could function outside of a segregated market. To both of these groups it meant that they were citizens of a democratic republic, with the right to elect and be elected, to be tried by a jury of their peers, to live wherever they could afford, and to spend, without racially imposed restrictions, whatever money they managed to acquire. In becoming White the Irish ceased to be Green.
>
> *Source*: Ignatiev 1995, 2–3.

The idea of race persists because it evolves as society evolves. Race has meaning because we endow it with meaning. Whiteness, together with its associated privileges, is a contested concept; its boundary expands and contracts depending on circumstances. Without a boundary, Whiteness would be meaningless and would not carry the many social benefits and privileges that it does.

The 1840s through the 1920s is a critical period for analyzing the contested boundary of Whiteness. During this time, the United States received millions of immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Mexico—all of whom would find their place in the racial hierarchy of the United States. Their place was not pre-determined; instead it was solidified through discourses and practices. This chapter considers the following:

1. How scientific, popular, and legal conceptions of race both worked together and collided at various moments during this period; and
2. How the idea of race continued to develop in the context of European and Asian immigration, the annexation of Mexican territories, the appropriation of Native American lands, and the abolition of slavery in the United States.

The Continuation of Scientific Racism

Today, most scientists reject the idea that the world can be divided into racial groups with measurable moral and intellectual differences. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, most scientists and the vast majority of White people concurred that there were biological differences between racial groups and that White people were the superior racial group. Popular and legal debates over who was and was not White relied on the purported scientific findings of the time.

Chapter 2.1 Video

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Measuring Brain Size

When nineteenth-century scientists compared the skulls of Black people to those of White people, they set out to use science to prove what they thought they already knew: that the White race was superior to all others. Nineteenth-century craniometry—the measurement of cranial capacity—provided the first opportunity for scientists to bring massive amounts of data to bear on their ideas of human hierarchy. As discussed in the previous chapter, these data on brain size supposedly provided "scientific" proof of White superiority. Eventually, however, craniometry lost its appeal, and scientists looked for new ways to measure human difference and prove European supremacy. These new methods revolved around measuring intelligence directly (Gould 1996).

Intelligence Testing

In the United States, **intelligence testing**—the attempt to quantify intellectual ability using scientific measures—became popular in the early twentieth century. Such tests were used in attempts to demonstrate the alleged superiority of not only Europeans as a whole but also particular groups of Europeans. When the United States began to receive large numbers of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, American scientists used intelligence testing to draw distinctions among them (Gould 1996; Brodkin 1998).

Intelligence tests were not originally designed to find out which races were the most intellectually fit. Instead, the goal was to identify children who needed extra help in school. Alfred Binet (1857–1911), director of the psychology laboratory at the Sorbonne in Paris, dedicated much of his scholarly career to developing ways to measure children's intellectual ability. It was only when Binet's test was taken to the United States that it began to be used to determine which groups were innately superior or inferior.

One of the first psychologists to use Binet's test was H. H. Goddard (1866–1957), who adapted it for use in the Vineland Training School for Feeble-Minded Boys and Girls. Goddard firmly believed that feeble-mindedness was inherited, attributing intelligence to a single gene. To provide evidence for his beliefs, Goddard took Binet's test to Ellis Island, where he administered the exam to arriving immigrants who spoke little English. Many received a low score, but instead of questioning the conditions under which he performed the exam, Goddard concluded that immigrants were of low intelligence. He further argued that, given these results, immigration had to be curtailed. Later in his career, Goddard conceded that perhaps what he defined as feeble- mindedness could be cured through education (Gould 1996).

The next prominent psychologist to use intelligence testing was Lewis Terman (1877–1956), a professor of psychology at Stanford University.

Terman modified the Binet test, endeavoring to standardize it such that the average person would score 100. This number should sound familiar, as it is still used today as the mean for IQ—the intelligence quotient—in what's known as the Stanford-Binet test. Terman's colleague R. M. Yerkes (1876–1956) carried on Terman's work and developed the Army Mental Tests, which aimed to measure innate intelligence. Yerkes succeeded in convincing the U.S. Army to allow him to administer the tests to all of its recruits. This massive sample of over a million respondents gave significant quantitative weight to the emerging field of intelligence testing (Gould 1996).

Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island were subjected to not only invasive medical inspections but also intelligence testing.

In 1969, Arthur Jensen, an educational psychologist at the University of California, Berkeley published an article in the *Harvard Educational Review* titled: "How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?" In this article, Jensen rejects the premise that there are cultural biases in intelligence tests. He also argues that Black people have lower intelligence than White people, and that most of this difference can be attributed to genetics. He further contends that supplemental educational programs such as Head Start do not affect general intelligence, and that these programs have thus failed.

Jensen's argument rests on two controversial claims: (1) he equates intelligence with I.Q. scores, and (2) he uses a controversial statistical method called heritability (Allen and Templeton 2021). Stephen Gould, whose work we discussed in Chapter One, argues that the primary error in intelligence testing is that of reification—making intelligence into a scientific concept by measuring it. Some people know more facts and trivia, are more quick-witted, can calculate sums in their heads faster, and are more eloquent in speech and writing than others. But as Gould contends, intelligence tests are flawed because they cannot truly measure this wide range of abilities. Jensen conflates the score on IQ tests with intelligence—he made the tautological claim that intelligence is what intelligence tests measure. If there is no agreed-upon measure of what intelligence actually is, it is impossible to conduct a serious study of whether or not there is a genetic basis for it (Allen and Templeton 2021).

Jensen used a statistical method called "heritability" to argue that differences in intelligence are due to genetic differences between racial groups. Heritability is a means of measuring the percentage contribution of hereditary and environmental factors. The measure is on a scale of 0 to 1 and requires a fixed population such as a cows on a farm or a field of almond trees. Jensen argued that the heritability of performance on IQ tests is 0.8, and thus that 80 percent of the score is due to heritable traits, and 20 percent due to environmental traits. However, scientists such as Garland Allen and Allan Templeton (2021) argue that Jensen's use of the heritability measure is misguided because he does not measure statistical

variation on an enclosed population that shares the same environment. Instead, he uses it on people and the measure is not intended to be used that way. Just because there are differences between the average IQ scores of Black and White people does not mean that the differences must be genetic, as they could be due to a host of environmental factors, which are impossible to control for (Allen and Templeton 2021).

Despite such critiques, these ideas continue to be propagated. In 1994, educational psychologist Richard Herrnstein, along with political scientist Charles Murray, published a book titled *The Bell Curve*, which perpetuated the theory that intelligence is hereditary. In 2010, Arthur Jensen and Philippe Rushton published an editorial in 2010 in the journal *Intelligence* arguing that the general factor of intelligence is largely influenced by genetics and that differences between Black and White people can be attributed to genetic differences. In 2014, *New York Times* science writer Nicholas Wade published a book, *A Troublesome Inheritance: Genes, Race and Human History*, which argues in favor of biological and genetic differences between races. Wade further contends that these genetic differences can help us to understand why Black people are prone to committing violent crime and why Chinese people are better at math. Although Wade claims that his approach is based on science, 140 of the most well-known human population geneticists in the country signed a letter addressed to the *New York Times Book Review* that stated "there is no support from the field of population genetics for Wade's conjectures." The letter was published on August 8, 2014, shortly after the release of Wade's book.

Sociologists identify arguments such as these as examples of **pseudoscience**—beliefs or practices appearing to be scientific but not based on the scientific method. Similar to nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century eugenicists, the authors of these works on intelligence and genetics mistakenly find that their own group—those of European descent—is intellectually superior to others.

Eugenics and Pseudoscience

The pseudoscience of race and intelligence has a sordid history. The **eugenics** movement, which had its heyday from about 1900 to 1930, aimed to improve the population through controlled breeding. Eugenicists believed that not only intelligence but also alcoholism, laziness, crime, poverty, and other moral and cultural traits could be inherited. Eugenicists used scientific methods to evaluate the hereditary nature of these character traits. Karl Pearson used correlation coefficients to evaluate the hereditary nature of traits. For example, if the parents were both of low intelligence, and then the children also had low intelligence, there would be a high correlation between parental intelligence and that of their offspring. Eugenicists used these correlation coefficients to argue that traits such as intelligence and alcoholism were hereditary (Allen and Templeton 2021). These analyses, of course, ignore environmental factors such as nutrition and the quality of schooling that play a role in intelligence and that, like genes, are shared among family members.

Eugenicists used this pseudoscience to advocate sterilizing the biologically unfit as a way of creating a superior breed of people. During this period, many Americans believed the country's population was in decline because of immigration and the high fertility of poor people (Lindsay 1998). In the United States, about 60,000 people who were deemed less intelligent were forcibly sterilized in the early twentieth century (Jacobson 1998). European countries such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland enacted compulsory sterilization laws. Sweden, a country of only 7 million people, sterilized over 62,000 people.

One of the main proponents of eugenics was Madison Grant (1865–1937), a lawyer, historian, and physical anthropologist. In much of his work, including the 1916 book *The Passing of the Great Race*, Grant put forward the idea that Europe could be divided into three races: "Nordics," "Alpines," and "Mediterraneans." He forcefully argued that Nordics were

the most fit of the three and that measures should be taken to ensure their racial purity and survival. His ideas made it into the mainstream both through his book and through his position as chairman of the U.S. Committee on Selective Immigration. In that capacity, he advocated a reduction in the numbers of Alpines and Mediterraneans admitted into the United States.

Madison Grant's ideas that Nordics were the "master race" and that it was incumbent upon the state to ban interracial marriages and sterilize inferior races found a large audience in Germany. Adolf Hitler referred to Grant's book *The Passing of the Great Race* as his "bible," and the German translation became widely read in the 1930s (Spiro 2008). Hitler put Grant's ideas into practice when he passed the Eugenic Sterilization Law in 1933, which led to the sterilization of 225,000 people in Germany in just three years. Similar to sterilization laws in the United States, this law was intended to improve the population. The Nazis then took these ideas several steps further, first to euthanasia and then to the gas chambers (Smedley 2007).

Nazi extremism caused White Americans as well as many Europeans to question the implications of White supremacist thinking. The experience of World War II led, in 1948, to the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which asserts that all humans possess inherent dignity and equality. This declaration in turn influenced the beginnings of the civil rights movement in the United States—a topic addressed in the next chapter.

VOICES

Carrie Buck

Carrie Buck (1906–1983) was separated from her mother, Emma, as a young child and was placed in a foster home, where she worked as a domestic servant for most of her childhood. When Carrie was a teenager, her foster parents' nephew raped her. As a result of the rape, Carrie became pregnant. After she gave birth at age seventeen to a girl, Vivian, her foster parents placed Carrie in the Virginia State Colony for Epileptics and Feebleminded, most likely in an attempt to avoid public shaming of their family. Carrie Buck's mother had previously been placed in this same facility on the grounds of her alleged feeble-mindedness and promiscuity. The colony ordered Carrie sterilized, and although the sterilization was challenged in court in 1925, the ruling was upheld. At the age of twenty-one in 1927, Carrie was sterilized under the authority of the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, part of the state of Virginia's eugenics program. Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes declared that "three generations of imbeciles are enough," referring to the alleged feeble-mindedness of Carrie, her mother, and her six-month-old daughter. Following her sterilization, Carrie Buck was released into the community as a domestic servant.

Carrie and Emma Buck. Carrie was sterilized under Virginia's eugenics program.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 2.1: The Continuation of Scientific Racism

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Exclusionary Immigration and Citizenship Policies

Intense debates on immigration and citizenship in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries drew on the discourses of scientific racism. From its inception, immigration policy in the United States has been racially motivated. The first major piece of immigration legislation, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, set the course for biased immigration policy in the twentieth century (Lee 2002).

Race-Related U.S. Immigration Laws and Supreme Court Rulings, 1790–1924

1790	1857	1866	1868	1882	1887	1898	1917	1922	
Naturalization law grants citizenship to White people born in the United States	*Dred Scott v. Sandford* rules that free Black people are not U.S. citizens	Civil Rights Act extends birthright citizenship to Black people in the United States	Fourteenth Amendment constitutionalizes the Civil Rights Act of 1866	Chinese Exclusion Act prohibits Chinese laborers from entering the United States	Dawes Act forces Native Americans to give up communal ownership of land	Supreme Court grants citizenship to Asians born in the United States	Immigration Act creates the "Asiatic Barred Zone"	*Takao Ozawa v. United States* rules that Whiteness is defined by Caucasian ancestry	

VOICES

Wong Foon Chuck: Making Home in the Borderlands between China, the United States, and Mexico

In February of 1863 Wong Foon Chuck (Huang Kuanzhuo) was born in Kaiping, Guandong province, about 145 kilometers away from Hong Kong. At just twelve years old, Wong Foon Chuck boarded a ship with his maternal uncle and sailed to San Francisco in 1874. The young Wong arrived in San Francisco at a moment when the city was at the vortex of a struggle between the federal government, which wanted to encourage free trade and migration, and California politicians who advocated for an end to Chinese immigration. White trade unionists on the Pacific Coast decried the arrival of Chinese who they portrayed as diseased, sneaky, and dangerous competitors. It would only be a few more years before the restrictionists convinced Congress to pass the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, banning Chinese laborers from entering the country.

Wong Foon Chuck

Wong was one of the lucky ones. Since he had entered before the exclusion law was passed, he could remain legally in the U.S. Wong had studied in a mission school in China and learned English under the tutelage of a missionary family in San Francisco. He found work as a servant in the missionary's home and as a waiter in the Hotel Jackson. Wong circulated in and out of various jobs as a domestic servant, waiter, and cook.

In 1883, Wong moved to El Paso, Texas and worked as a cook for and used the opportunity to learn Spanish. He soon bought the Hotel Central and established an adjacent restaurant, laundry, and curio shop where he sold souvenirs from China and Japan. Wong was only in his early 20s, and had arrived in the U.S. fewer than ten years earlier, and yet he had worked his way up from domestic servant and cook to owner of a hotel and three other businesses.

Wong became a prominent figure in northern Mexico and in Eagle Pass. However, when he left the immediate border zone, he confronted the brutal Chinese exclusion laws head on. On 13 May 1892, Wong was arrested in San Antonio for not having proper papers, even though, as one New York newspaper reported, Wong owned assets of more than $100,000. The Mexican consul in Eagle Pass testified that Wong had a good reputation for "his conduct and honorability" and provided the U.S. courts

with documentation proving that he was a naturalized citizen of Mexico. Even though Wong had enough money to provide bond, U.S. law prohibited Chinese from doing so, and thus he was forced to pay the salary of his jailer until he was able to appear before the commissioner. The Western District Court of Texas ruled that Wong should be excluded because he was Chinese. The courts acknowledged that he was a businessman and had become a citizen of Mexico, both of which ostensibly should have allowed him to enter into the U.S., even under the exclusion act. Nonetheless, the court sentenced him to one hour of forced work and then deported him to Mexico.

Source: Adapted from *Forced Out, Fenced In*, chapter by Elliott Young

Excluding Asians

The **Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)** was overtly racist in that it targeted one specific group on the basis of race and class: Chinese laborers. It was renewed in 1892, made permanent in 1902, and not repealed until 1943. The act specifically prohibited Chinese laborers from entering the United States while allowing Chinese merchants and teachers to enter. According to the 1890 census, there were 102,620 Chinese men and 3,868 Chinese women present in the country, mostly in California. At the time, most Chinese immigrants were laborers; they were integral to the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad. By 1882, the federal government had succumbed to pressure from White laborers to exclude Chinese immigrants, and Congress issued this racially exclusive immigration law.

Chapter 2.2 Video

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Subsequently, the **Immigration Act of 1917** expanded the Chinese Exclusion Act to deny entry to anyone coming from the "Asiatic Barred Zone," which included India, Burma, the Malay States, Arabia, and Afghanistan (Calavita 2000; Lee 2002). Between 1917 and 1952, the United States placed strict immigration limits on people from Asia while welcoming those from preferred European countries. The intent behind these laws was to improve the racial composition of the United States.

The Chinese Exclusion Act compelled the federal government to put into place the bureaucratic machinery needed to patrol the borders of the country. As the act excluded specific groups of people from entering the United States, it required that the government establish immigration controls and checks. The act required the creation of an immigration inspection force, one that eventually would evolve into the Border Patrol. It further required the creation of certificates of residence—the precursors to today's "green cards"—for Chinese individuals who were permitted to remain in the United States. It was not until 1928 that other immigrants had to carry proof of legal presence. In 1940, these cards were replaced by "alien registration cards," which continue to be used today (Lee 2002).

RESEARCH FOCUS

Chinese Exclusion and Gatekeeping Ideology

Historian Erika Lee (2002) argues that the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act helped shape the racialized nature of subsequent U.S. immigration policies. The act made the United States what she calls a "gatekeeping" nation—one that first racialized Chinese immigrants and then others as a permanently alien and inferior class that should be excluded. Specifically, she contends that

> *Chinese exclusion introduced a "gatekeeping" ideology, politics, law, and culture that transformed the ways in which Americans viewed and thought about race, immigration, and the United States' identity as a nation of immigration. It legalized and reinforced the need to restrict, exclude, and deport "undesirable" and excludable immigrants. (Lee 2002, 37)*

Subsequent to the passage of Chinese exclusion, *nativists*—people who presume the superiority of native-born citizens—directed their ire at other groups, often using the same narratives and discourses used to exclude the Chinese. These nativists were successful in lobbying for more exclusion laws, including the Immigration Acts of 1917 and 1924, which drastically restricted immigration from southern and eastern Europe. This ideology continues into the present day, as current immigration laws prioritize certain immigrants over others.

Once the United States passed selective immigration policies, it became necessary to build a state apparatus and bureaucracy to enforce these laws. The 1892 Geary Act and the 1893 McCreary Amendment required Chinese laborers to register with the federal government and obtain certificates of residence. By 1928, all immigrants were required to secure "immigrant identification cards," precursors to today's "green cards."

Based on her analysis of the Chinese Exclusion Act and related legislation, Lee contends that gatekeeping ideology "was instrumental in the formation of the nation itself and in articulating a definition of American national identity and belonging" (2002, 41). The legislation thus transformed the United States from a nation of immigrants to one that guarded its gates against foreigners it deemed undesirable.

For Discussion

1. What is the relationship between anti-Chinese sentiment and nativism toward other immigrant groups?
2. What does Lee mean by "gatekeeping"?

Source: Lee 2002.

The Johnson-Reed Act (Immigration Act of 1924)

The next major piece of immigration legislation, the **Johnson-Reed Act (or Immigration Act of 1924)**, was also overtly racist in that it was designed to increase the Nordic population in the United States and halt the growth of other groups. The act made passports and visas a requirement for entry to the United States and established national-origin quotas for European immigrants. These quotas dictated the number of immigrants who could enter the United States in any given year. Calculated on the basis of the U.S. population's composition in 1890, the quotas were applicable only to the European population. Specifically, the law stipulated that the quotas not take into account the following four groups: (1) immigrants from the Western Hemisphere, (2) aliens ineligible for citizenship (i.e., Asians), (3) the descendants of slaves, and (4) Native Americans. By basing national-origin quotas exclusively on the European population at the time, the law made it clear that Africans, Asians, and Native Americans were not considered to be part of the nation (Ngai 2004). It is also remarkable to look back on this legislation from today's perspective: no restrictions were placed on Mexican immigration.

The Johnson-Reed Act ignored the presence of Asians and Africans in the United States and set a quota of 100 immigrants per year for immigrants from China, Japan, India, Ethiopia, Liberia, and South Africa. These restrictionist policies remained in place until after World War II. In 1943, Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act, and in 1946, it extended the right of citizenship to other Asians (Reimers 1981; Ngai 2004). The quotas were revised in the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and then completely revamped in 1965.

The cover of an 1878 fictional story about the supposed economic and moral threats posed by large-scale Chinese immigration.

Intelligence test proponents and eugenicists influenced the debates surrounding the Johnson-Reed Act. The most radical eugenicists advocated sterilization of people deemed inferior. Eugenicists were invited to testify before Congress during these debates, and in their testimonies, they made it clear that they believed Northern Europeans were superior to people from southern and eastern Europe. Harry H. Laughlin, director of the Eugenics Institute, for example, pointed to the Army Mental Tests carried out by Robert Yerkes as evidence of the inferiority of Poles, Italians, Russians, and Black people.

Members of Congress took the ideas of eugenicists into account when they voted to restrict the immigration of people they deemed undesirable immigrants and to promote the immigration of those whom they expected might improve the American stock. The quotas that took effect in 1929 reflect these preferences: Great Britain and Northern Ireland were granted a quota of 65,271 immigrants; Italy, 5,802; Yugoslavia, 845; and most African and Asian countries, 100 (Ngai 2004). Immigration restrictions reflected a clear racial bias in determining who could enter the country. Citizenship restrictions, which we consider next, demonstrated racial biases regarding who could become a full member of society.

Birthright Citizenship and Naturalization for White People Only

One of the first laws passed in the newly formed United States was the **Naturalization Law of 1790**, which granted citizenship to White people born in the United States and limited naturalization to immigrants who were “free White persons.” Whereas ***birthright citizenship*** refers to gaining citizenship in the country of one’s birth, ***naturalization*** describes the process whereby people become citizens of a country where they were not born.

Since the inception of the United States, birthright citizenship (also known as *jus soli*) has prevailed as the law of the land, albeit with racial restrictions. Birthright citizenship conveys the idea that citizenship is determined by where one is born, not by the nationality, race, or citizenship of one's parents. This concept was part of English common law, on which much of U.S. law is based. The 1790 law was explicitly restricted to White people: it was not until the Civil Rights Act of 1866 that native-born Black people were granted citizenship. In 1868, this act was incorporated into the Constitution in the form of the Fourteenth Amendment, which reads: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States, and of the state wherein they reside."

The Fourteenth Amendment granted birthright citizenship to most Black and White people born in the United States—but only to Black and White people. Native Americans were not officially granted birthright citizenship until 1924. And it was not until the Nationality Act of 1940 that birthright citizenship became a reality for all people born in the United States (Haney-Lopez 2006).

Immigrants who were neither Black nor White would have to wait until 1952 before they could become U.S. citizens. Throughout the twentieth century, immigrants from China, Japan, Syria, and India applied for citizenship via naturalization and were denied on the basis that they were not White (Haney-Lopez 2006).

SELF-ASSESSMENT 2.2: Exclusionary Immigration and Citizenship Policies

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Defining Whiteness in Court

Between 1878 and 1952, U.S. courts considered fifty-one cases in which a noncitizen contested his denial of citizenship on the basis of his race. In all but one case, the noncitizen claimed that he was in fact White and therefore should be granted citizenship. These petitioners were Native American, Chinese, Hawaiian, Burmese, Japanese, Indian, Syrian, Armenian, Filipino, Korean, Arabian, Mexican, and mixed race. The courts were not consistent in their determinations: one court declared Syrians to be not White, whereas an appeal court ruled that they were. Most of the claims to Whiteness were denied, with the exception of those made by Mexicans (1897), Armenians (1909 and 1925), and Syrians (1910 and 1915) (Haney-Lopez 2006).

It was not predetermined which groups would be granted Whiteness in the United States. Instead, court decisions played a role in assigning a racial category to each national-origin group in the United States. The assignment of Whiteness to Armenians and Italians and non-Whiteness to Japanese, for example, would have enduring effects on their social location in the United States. Pronouncing the Armenians as White

> *allowed them a prosperous and privileged position in American society. This prosperity then confirmed the common knowledge of their Whiteness, which in turn served to justify the judicial treatment of Armenians as White persons. The opposite occurred with the Japanese. Again, their position in the U.S. racial schema was initially far from certain: some had been naturalized as "White persons," but others had been excluded from citizenship. Partly under court authority, however, the non-Whiteness of Japanese immigrants emerged as common knowledge.*
>
> (*Haney-Lopez 2006, 93*)

Prominent court cases denied Japanese and Asian Indians citizenship and, in many cases, stripped them of their land. Japanese and Indian

groups would have to wait several decades before being granted all the rights associated with citizenship (Ngai 2004).

Legal scholar Ian Haney-Lopez (2006) argues that social ideas about Whiteness influenced both scientific endeavors and legal decisions. In cases of granting or denying citizenship based on race, judges cited both scientific studies and what they called "common knowledge" in their decisions. Haney-Lopez contends that in determining Whiteness, judges' decisions reflected their own unconscious bias and effort to maintain the privileges associated with being White. The fact that Whiteness could be contested in court shows that it is not a fixed category; it exists only by virtue of defining some people as non-White.

Two of the prerequisite cases that reached the Supreme Court were *Takao Ozawa v. United States* and *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*. These two cases stand in stark opposition to each other and make it clear that in a court of law, Whiteness is what the judges say it is; that is, Whiteness is a legal construct. In *Ozawa*, the court determined that despite Japanese-born Takao Ozawa's White skin, he was not White because he was not Caucasian. In *Thind*, argued just months later, the Court determined that even though Asian Indians such as Bhagat Singh Thind were Caucasian, they were not White.

Takao Ozawa v. United States (1922)

Takao Ozawa was born in Japan in 1875. At the age of nineteen, he moved to California and studied at the University of California at Berkeley. He met and married another Japanese national living in the United States, and they had children together. In 1914, when he was thirty-nine years old, Ozawa applied for citizenship in Hawaii, where he was living at the time. The U.S. district attorney of Hawaii denied his application for citizenship, stating that because he was not White, he was ineligible for naturalization. Ozawa appealed this decision, and after many years, his case made it all the way to the Supreme Court. One of Ozawa's major

arguments was that his skin color was as light as that of many White people. Of course, this was also true for many people legally defined as Black. The Supreme Court denied his petition on the basis that he was not White, even though his skin color was lighter than that of some people considered to be White. The ruling classified him as not White on the grounds that "White" meant "Caucasian," and ethnologists had determined that he was not Caucasian (Haney-Lopez 2006).

Takao Ozawa. In *Takao Ozawa v. United States* (1922), the Court ruled that Whiteness is defined by Caucasian ancestry.

United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind (1923)

Just three months after the *Ozawa* decision, the Supreme Court reviewed the petition of Bhagat Singh Thind, who arrived in the United States at the age of twenty-one in 1913. In 1920, Thind applied for naturalization on the basis that, as a high-caste Hindu, he was in fact Caucasian and therefore White. The district court granted his petition for naturalization. However, the federal government appealed that decision, and Thind's case also went to the Supreme Court. Thind's case was heard less than two months after the *Ozawa* decision, on January 11, 1923. The Supreme Court did not dispute Thind's argument that, as an Asian Indian, he was "Caucasian," per the latest scientific evidence. The court wrote, "It may be true that the blond Scandinavian and the brown Hindu have a common ancestor in the dim reaches of antiquity, but the average man knows perfectly well that there are unmistakable and profound differences between them today" (quoted in Haney-Lopez 2006, 63). To follow up on this idea, the Court's final ruling stated, "What we now hold is that the words 'free White person' are words of common speech, to be interpreted in accordance of the common man, synonymous with the word 'Caucasian' only as that word is popularly understood" (quoted in Haney-Lopez 2006, 64).

Bhagat Singh Thind, denied citizenship because he was not considered White despite his Caucasian ancestry.

The relationship between common knowledge and law is circular. When judges decided who was legally White, they were subject to the unconscious biases inherent in what is considered common knowledge. At the same time, their decisions reinforced common beliefs about who was White and who was not. Similar processes occurred with identification of the Irish, Italians, and Jews, people who today are nearly universally accepted as White.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 2.3: Defining Whiteness in Court

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How the Irish, Italians, and Jews Became White

As we saw in the chapter-opening passage, the millions of Irish who came to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century did not think of themselves as "White" when they lived in Ireland. In a context in which everyone is Irish, Whiteness has little meaning. However, both the government's decision to permit the Irish to come to the United States in large numbers and their eventual incorporation into the United States were closely related to their perceived Whiteness. How did this perception of the Irish as White come about? The process through which Irish and other Europeans acquired the status of unequivocal Whiteness was not as straightforward as one might think.

Relatively few immigrants arrived in the United States between 1790 and the 1830s. By the 1840s, however, hundreds of thousands of immigrants began to arrive, primarily from Ireland and Germany (Figure 2-1). Between 1846 and 1855, over 3 million immigrants came to the United States, including 1,288,307 from Ireland and 975,311 from Germany, most of whom were fleeing deprivation in their home countries. Irish immigration to the United States reached a high point in 1851, at 221,253 for the year. The highest number of German immigrants in one year was recorded in 1882, when 250,630 Germans arrived in the United States. Once German and Irish immigration began to taper off, Italians and Russians (mostly Jews) began to immigrate in large numbers. Italian immigration peaked in 1907, with 258,731 immigrants, and Russian immigration peaked in the same year, with 258,943 immigrants arriving in the United States.

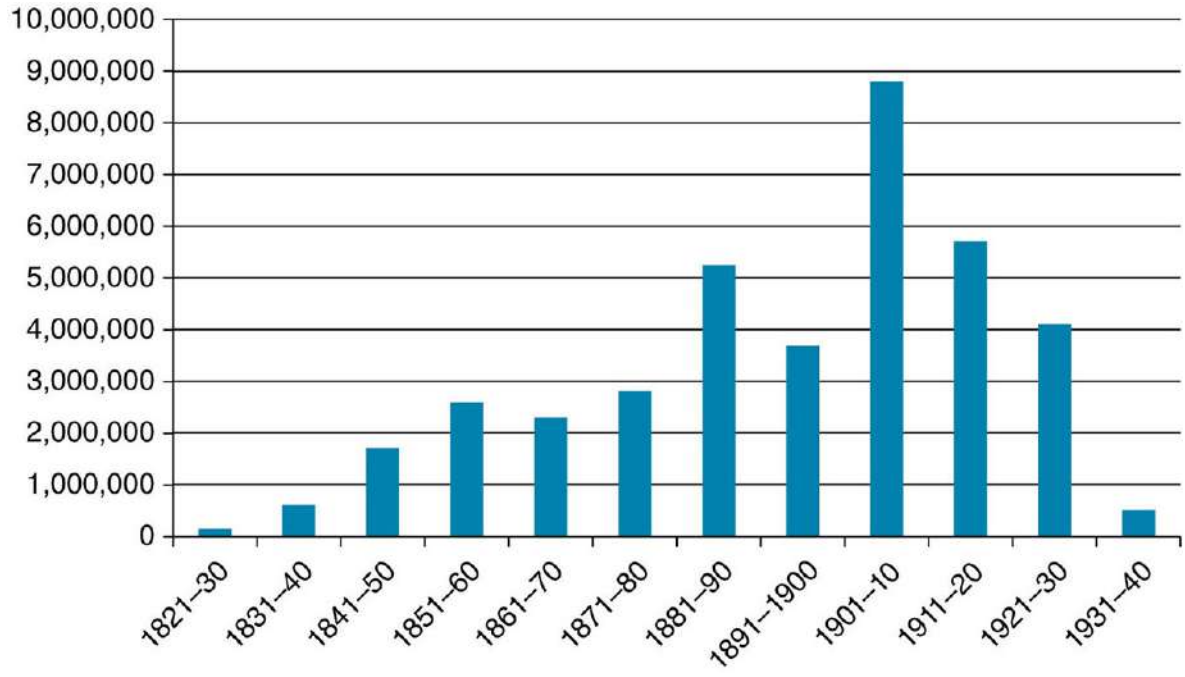

FIGURE 2-1 Immigration to the United States, 1820–1940 Source: Office of Immigration Statistics, Department of Homeland Security.

As each of these groups integrated into the United States, they experienced both assimilation, through which Irish, Italians, and Germans became Americans, and racialization, through which Celtic people, Jewish people, and Mediterranean people became White (Jacobson 1998). **Assimilation** is a process whereby immigrants lose their ethnic distinctiveness and become part of the mainstream—for example, when Italian Americans become simply Americans. **Racialization** is a process whereby people come to be recognized as part of a racial group, such as when Mediterranean people become White (as defined by themselves and others).

The Irish

Ireland has a long history of oppression of Irish Catholics by English Protestants. In the eighteenth century, Ireland was governed by the Penal Codes, which denied many rights and privileges to Catholics, including the rights to vote, to attend university, and to own horses worth more

than five pounds. Catholics in Ireland were known as Celts or Gaels, and most lived in poverty. Neither Catholics nor Protestants felt united as members of a White race. It was not until Catholics and Protestants immigrated to the United States and saw that Whiteness was associated with free wage labor and Blackness with slavery that Whiteness assumed any real meaning for them. They further learned that Blackness was devalued and that White people were entitled to privileges denied to Black people, similar to the privileges denied to Catholics in Ireland (Ignatiev 1995).

When the Irish arrived in the United States, they found a situation in which Black people occupied the lowest rungs of the paid labor force. The Irish joined Black Americans in these occupations—as coal heavers, cooks, stewards, millworkers, servants, and waiters—and began to form unions to fight for better wages and working conditions. Because of the prevailing racial hierarchy in the United States, these unions were able to exclude Black workers from membership. As such, between 1830 and 1870, the Irish slowly replaced Black Americans as workers in these industries. Black workers soon found themselves confined to the occupations of ragpickers, shoe-shiners, chimney sweeps, and itinerant laborers. Over the course of a few decades, Irish immigrants were able to capitalize on their newly found Whiteness and control several niches as longshoremen, waiters, millworkers, and factory employees. Insofar as the Irish were able to secure their position in the United States by excluding Black people, many scholars argue that the Irish became White through this process (Ignatiev 1995).

The Italians

As the Irish were establishing their Whiteness in relation to Black people in the United States, Italians were just beginning to arrive. Similar to the Irish, the Italians had no reason to think of themselves as “White” prior to their arrival in the United States. Upon migrating to the United States,

Italians often faced discrimination because of both their Catholicism and stereotypes related to their alleged criminality, and they were even lynched on occasion in the U.S. South.

Italian American family sewing garments in their tenement in New York City, 1913.

One notable case occurred in 1891 in New Orleans, when eleven Italians were accused of murder and conspiracy following the death of Police Chief David Hennessy. Although acquitted in a jury trial amidst accusations of bribery and corruption, they continued to be held in the jailhouse. A mob of angry townspeople, infuriated by the acquittal and charges of corruption, descended on the jailhouse and lynched the Italian prisoners. In the aftermath of the raid, a local judge, R. H. Marr, pointed out that the community's rage was in part because the victim was a non-Italian: "Until the killing of Hennessy," said Marr, "these people had so far as the public knew, confined their operation to their own race"

(quoted in Jacobson 1998, 58). Such references to an Italian "race" were common during this time.

Italians who arrived in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were legally White. At the same time, Italians were often juxtaposed to "Anglo-Saxons" or to members of the "Nordic" race. Matthew Jacobson argues that during this period, one could be both "White *and* racially distinct from other White people" (1998, 6). This is the same contradiction we saw when examining the Irish. These immigrants were legally entitled to Whiteness but were not able to attain all the privileges associated with being White. It was only after the passage of legislation that cut off most immigration from eastern and southern Europe that Italians came to be seen as only culturally, not racially, different from other White people. We see a similar pattern with Jewish people—mostly those of eastern European descent—who gradually gained acceptance as members of the "White race."

The Jews

In the early twentieth century, Jewish immigrants from Germany and eastern Europe were concentrated in New York City, where many worked in the garment industry. They encountered numerous forms of **anti-Semitism**, a term that refers to discrimination, hostility, or prejudice against Jewish people. Just as trade unions organized by the Irish excluded Black people from wage labor in many large cities, the acceptance of anti-Semitism enabled craft unions to exclude Jewish people from better-paying occupations. As a result, even Jewish people who were skilled hatmakers, watchmakers, and tailors had no choice but to work as unskilled laborers. Not only were Jewish people relegated to these low-paying jobs, they often had no choice but to live in cramped housing in slum areas known as ghettos. Further, elite universities routinely barred them from admission. This labor, housing, and

educational discrimination has led some scholars to contend that Jewish people were not viewed as White in this period (Brodkin 1998).

The lynching of Leo Frank, a Jewish man, is one case supporting this argument. In April 1913, Mary Phagan, a fourteen-year-old White girl, was found dead in the basement of the pencil factory that Frank owned. After a long trial, Frank was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death, but owing to the nature of the evidence, the governor commuted his sentence to life in prison. In response, a White mob rampaged the prison and dragged Frank to the outskirts of Atlanta, where they lynched him for the alleged murder and rape of Phagan. Remarkably, Frank's conviction rested largely on the testimony of Jim Conley, a Black janitor at the factory. The fact that Frank was hanged from a tree in a way similar to how African Americans were lynched caused many to ask whether Jewish people were White. The lynching, combined with the fact that a Black man's testimony formed the basis of the case, indicated that Frank did not benefit from the privileges associated with Whiteness in the early twentieth century (Jacobson 1998).

In the aftermath of World War II, as Americans reckoned with the horrors of Nazism and subsequently repudiated the eugenics movement, anti-Semitism lost much of its hold. Whereas Jewish people who grew up in the 1920s and 1930s faced virulent anti-Semitism, it had diminished by the 1950s. Accordingly, Whiteness expanded to include Jewish people (Brodkin 1998).

SELF-ASSESSMENT 2.4: How the Irish, Italians, and Jews Became White

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Structural Violence against Native Americans and African Americans

As we have seen, immigrants to the United States contended with race-related discrimination and hardship in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Native-born populations did as well. Native Americans confronted seizures of their lands and forced assimilation, while African Americans faced lynchings and consistent denial of their rights as citizens and as human beings. We can describe these experiences as forms of **structural violence** in that government policies and practices inflicted specific institutional harm on Native Americans and African Americans.

Native Americans: Appropriating Lands, Assimilating Tribes

As discussed in the previous chapter, Indian removal policies beginning in the 1830s displaced Native Americans from their lands. White people attempted to justify this displacement by arguing that Native Americans had not made appropriate use of the territory (Berger 2009). These policies excluded Native Americans from White society and forced them to relocate to undesirable areas. On the heels of Indian removal, the **1851 Indian Appropriations Act** created reservations for Native Americans and provided funds for relocation to these communal lands.

During what is known as the **Allotment and Assimilation Period** from the 1870s to the 1920s, the oppression of Native Americans intensified, and two-thirds of Native American lands were lost. The **1871 Indian Appropriations Act** declared that the U.S. government would

no longer sign treaties with Native American tribes. This act made it easier for the U.S. government to appropriate native lands. The **1887 Dawes Act** then forced Native Americans to give up their communal lands and to claim individual ownership of plots. Native Americans were allotted a specific amount of land per family, and any remaining land was sold to White settlers. These allotment policies continued until the **1934 Indian Reorganization Act**, which finally ended them and facilitated tribal self-government to a certain degree.

While the Dawes Act forced native people to give up their lands, a federal program obliged many Native American children to attend strict boarding schools (Noel 2002). These schools required students to renounce their languages and heritage. In the words of Captain Richard Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, the mission of these schools was to "[k]ill the Indian in him and save the man" (quoted in Berger 2009, 629). As Bethany Berger (2009) argues, the forced assimilation of Native Americans enabled White people to further their encroachment on Native American lands.

The appropriation of Native American lands was enacted through violence. This image depicts settlers murdering the Yuki people in California in 1861.

African Americans and the Struggle for Rights

Native-born Black people, exploited for their labor power by wealthy White people, also struggled to gain and retain fundamental rights. In 1865, four million Africans and their descendants were freed after centuries of enslavement. The end of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery marked the beginning of the **Reconstruction** era (1865–1877), during which the fragmented country attempted to reunite after a devastating war. Newly vested with citizenship and the right to vote, many Black men were elected to public office in southern states. The first South Carolina legislature after the Civil War comprised eighty-seven

Black people and forty White people. Black officials also were elected at the national level: between 1869 and 1901, there were two Black senators and twenty Black men in the House of Representatives (Franklin and Moss 2000).

These Black legislators passed a series of laws that generated opportunities for all—including more equitable tax laws, the establishment of public schooling, and the introduction of compulsory schooling in the South. With these Black legislators on board, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866—which guarantees equal protections under the law to all persons. In 1868, Congress ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, which ensured citizenship to any person born in the United States. And, in 1870, Congress ratified the Fifteenth Amendment, which guaranteed the right to vote to all men regardless of race or color. These fundamental rights endure until today in U.S. law and form the basis for rights claims for marginalized people from all racial backgrounds. The presence of Black people in Congress, however, would not endure. Reconstruction ended in 1877, when President Rutherford B. Hayes pulled federal troops from the Southern United States (Hannah-Jones 2019).

Federal troops had been protecting Black people's rights in the south and their removal empowered White people to engage in systematic and state-sponsored oppression of Black people for the next ninety years. White southerners established a variety of secret orders aimed at maintaining White racial domination, including the well-known Ku Klux Klan and the Knights of the White Camellia. Klan members as well as members of other secret orders used intimidation, murder, arson, and bribery to deprive Black people of political equality. Black people were warned not to vote and were threatened with beatings and murder if they did so. White people located polling places far from Black communities and blocked roads to keep Black people from voting.

In the 1890s, nearly all southern states passed suffrage amendments that effectively disenfranchised Black people. In Mississippi, for example,

legislators wrote a suffrage amendment that imposed a poll tax, excluded people who had been convicted of certain crimes, and required literacy tests. These measures prevented most Black people in the state from voting. Other states followed suit, enacting grandfather clauses, poll taxes, and literacy requirements that led to the disenfranchisement of most southern Black people (Franklin and Moss 2000).

Although lynchings occurred across the country and victims included Jews, Italians, Mexicans, and Native Americans, most victims were African Americans in the South. Between 1884 and 1900, there were more than 2,500 lynchings. Another 1,000 people were lynched in the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. In addition to lynching, Black people in both the South and the North faced intimidation and violence at the hands of White people. In the first few decades of the twentieth century, race riots exploded in cities across the country, and Black people bore the brunt of the violence (Pfeifer 2006).

Cross burning at Klan members' meeting, circa 1900.

One of many examples of race riots occurred in Springfield, Ohio, in 1904. A mob raided a jail where a Black man was being held on charges that he had killed a White police officer. The mob tore the man from his cell, shot him, and hanged him from a telegraph pole. Members of the mob then took their wrath to the Black section of town, where they beat many Black people and burned eight buildings to the ground. Similar riots happened in East Saint Louis, Illinois, and in other cities, when White workers protested the influx of Black workers from the South (Franklin and Moss 2000).

Lynching scene in Texas, 1905: A Black man, accused of having attacked a White woman, is hanged immediately.

In addition to outright violence by hate groups and lynch mobs, Black people also faced state-imposed legal segregation (separation of racial groups) and political disenfranchisement. These measures were known collectively as Jim Crow laws, a set of laws in place between 1876 and 1965 that mandated segregation in all public facilities (as we will discuss in Chapter Three). These laws ranged from the segregation of public schools and transportation to the establishment of separate restaurants, drinking fountains, and regiments in the U.S. military. The legal segregation of public schools continued until the Supreme Court declared public school segregation unconstitutional in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The remaining Jim Crow laws were overturned with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965—100 years after the abolition of slavery.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 2.5: Structural Violence against Native Americans and African Americans

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Conclusion and Discussion

Since the creation of the United States, Whiteness has carried with it undeniable privileges. For Syrians, Mexicans, Armenians, Irish, Jews, and Italians, the importance of being considered White has been a reflection of this privilege. As we will discuss in Chapter Seven, Peggy McIntosh describes White privilege as "an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (1989, 10).

Not being White, in contrast, carries burdens. Because of this disparity, fifty people contested their racial status in the courts between 1878 and 1952 (Haney-Lopez 2006) in a personal and collective mission to attain full citizenship. The Japanese community paid close attention to the *Ozawa* case in the hope that Japanese people in the United States would be classified as White and thus be able to attain citizenship. The Indian community watched the *Thind* case just as closely. In a very different way, Irish, Italians, Jews, and other new immigrants discovered the advantages associated with Whiteness in the United States. At the same time, Native Americans and African Americans faced hardships associated with the idea of race.

As the histories recounted in this chapter demonstrate, those who have had the power to define Whiteness have benefited from its privileges. Whiteness is valuable only as long as some people are not labeled as White, and it is meaningful only if we endow it with meaning.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 2.6: Conclusion and Discussion

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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

2.1 How did scientific racism evolve over the twentieth century?

- In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scientists continued their quest to demonstrate the supposed superiority of the White race. To do so, they used craniometry and intelligence testing, and many promoted eugenics.

Review

» What is the origin of intelligence testing?

» What were some of the consequences of the eugenics movement?

Critical Thinking

» What is an example of contesting the boundary of Whiteness?

» Why does Stephen Gould argue that the primary error in intelligence testing is reification (making something abstract more concrete or real)?

2.2 How were U.S. immigration and citizenship policies racially exclusionary?

- Scientific racism influenced U.S. immigration and citizenship policies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- The first major piece of immigration legislation in the United States was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred

Chinese immigrants from entering the United States.

- The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act, based on eugenicist ideas, was designed to increase the number of Nordic immigrants to the United States by setting country-specific quotas.
- In 1868, African Americans gained citizenship rights under the Fourteenth Amendment.
- Native Americans did not gain U.S. citizenship rights until 1924.

Review

» What was the significance of the Chinese Exclusion Act?

» What changes did the Johnson-Reed Act make to immigration policy?

» How did the Fourteenth Amendment change who was eligible for citizenship?

Critical Thinking

» How were eugenicists able to influence immigration quota laws in the early twentieth century?

» How were non-White people excluded from citizenship?

2.3 How did legal decisions shape racial categories?

- In several prominent court cases, plaintiffs argued for their inclusion in the category of Whiteness.
- In the contradictory Supreme Court decisions of *Thind* and *Ozawa*, judges drew from their own biases when deciding who was legally White.

Review

» How has Whiteness been legally constructed?

» Why does the author argue that there is a contradiction between the *Singh* and *Thind* cases?

Critical Thinking

» What is the significance of the claim that “Whiteness is what the court says it is”?

2.4 Where did European immigrants fit into the racial hierarchy in the United States?

- When European immigrants arrived in the United States, they learned to think of themselves as White.
- The Irish replaced Black workers in several industries and then worked to exclude Black people from wage labor.
- Italians faced discrimination as Southern Europeans yet benefited from their legal status as White people.
- Jewish immigrants were relegated to low-paying jobs and crowded housing yet enjoyed the benefits of citizenship, which were denied to many non-White people.

Review

» Historically speaking, what are some of the privileges associated with Whiteness?

» What is the difference between racialization and assimilation?

Critical Thinking

» What can we learn about Whiteness by comparing the treatment of Asian Americans to that of European Americans in the early twentieth century?

» What does it mean to say that the Irish, Italians, and Jews

became White?

» Why would Syrian, Jewish, Italian, and Irish immigrants want to be classified as White?

» How have the privileges associated with Whiteness changed over time?

2.5 What forms of racial and structural violence did Native Americans and African Americans confront in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

- Native Americans lost two-thirds of their lands as a consequence of allotment acts.
- White hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan emerged in opposition to the perceived rise in power of Black voters and politicians.

Review

» What are some differences between the forms of violence that Native Americans and African Americans faced during the early twentieth century?

Critical Thinking

» How were Indian boarding schools a form of structural violence?

» Why do you think lynchings were common during this period?

Talking about Race

Europeans who came to the United States before 1924 arrived during a time when there were few to no restrictions on immigration. Those Europeans subsequently had many options for legalization that are no longer available to today's immigrants. You may be able to use these facts in conversations about contemporary immigration. Many descendants of Europeans believe that their ancestors came to the United States the so-called right way and that immigrants who come today are not law-abiding. Using the knowledge you have gained in this chapter, seek out productive conversations about both historical and contemporary illegal immigration.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 2.7: Check Your Understanding

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LIST OF KEY TERMS

1851 Indian Appropriations Act

1871 Indian Appropriations Act

1887 Dawes Act

1934 Indian Reorganization Act

Allotment and Assimilation Period

anti-Semitism

Assimilation

birthright citizenship

Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)

eugenics

Immigration Act of 1917

intelligence testing

Johnson-Reed Act (or Immigration Act of 1924)

naturalization

Naturalization Law of 1790

pseudoscience

Racialization

Reconstruction

structural violence

3

Racial Ideologies

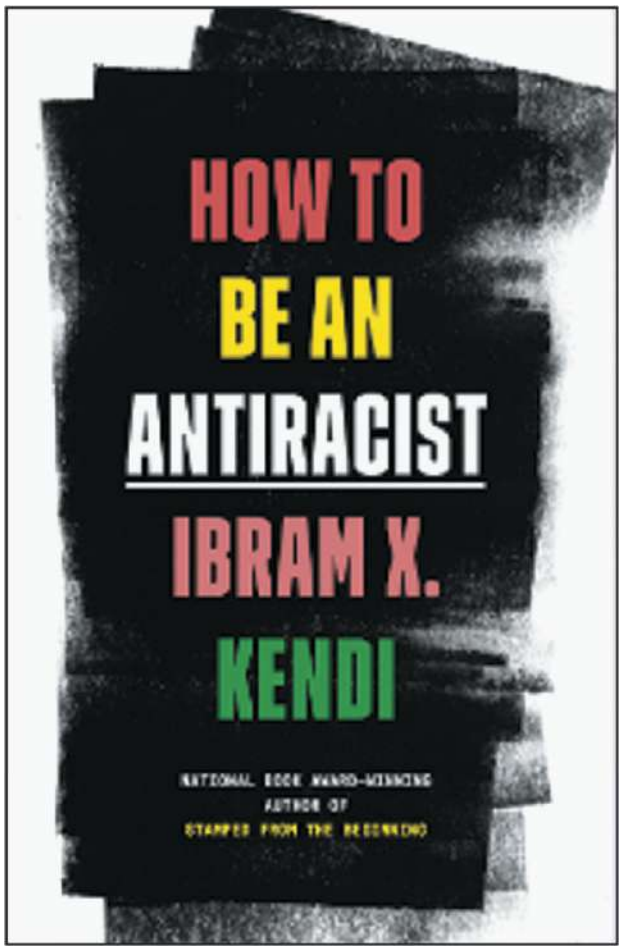
from the 1920s to the Present

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

Blind. Dane Chanase. Oil on canvas, 111 × 86.5 cm. *(Private Collection/Photo © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images)*

As You Read

- **3.1** How do racial ideologies both persist and change?
- **3.2** In what ways was 1920 to 1965 an era of overt racism?
- **3.3** What role did the civil rights movement play in promoting change?
- **3.4** What are some of the forms that racism takes today?
- **3.5** What is color-blind racism, and how does it perpetuate inequality?
- **3.6** What did the elections of Presidents Obama and Trump reveal about racial ideologies in the United States?



> In 2016, Donald Trump described himself as “the least racist person you’ve ever encountered.”[1] Despite a long history of having worked to exclude people of color from opportunities and a long record of saying things like the primarily Black country of Haiti is a “shithole” and that Nigerian immigrants should “go back to their huts,” Donald Trump perceives himself as not racist.[2] In this excerpt from *How to Be an Antiracist*, Ibram Kendi argues that this sort of “denial is the heartbeat of racism.”

The language used by the forty-fifth president of the United States offers a clear example of how this sort of racist language and thinking works. Long before he became president, Donald Trump liked to say, “Laziness is a trait in Blacks.” When he decided to run for president, his plan for making America great again: defaming Latinx immigrants as mostly criminals and rapists and demanding billions for a border wall to block them. He promised “a total and

> complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States." Once he became president, he routinely called his Black critics "stupid." He claimed immigrants from Haiti "all have AIDS," while praising White supremacists as "very fine people" in the summer of 2017.
>
> Through it all, whenever someone pointed out the obvious, Trump responded with variations on a familiar refrain: "No, no, I'm not a racist. I'm the least racist person you have ever interviewed," that "you've ever met," that "you've ever encountered." Trump's behavior may be exceptional, but his denials are normal. When racist ideas resound, denials that those ideas are racist typically follow. When racist policies resound, denials that those policies are racist also follow.
>
> Denial is the heartbeat of racism, beating across ideologies, races, and nations. It is beating within us. Many of us who strongly call out Trump's racist ideas will strongly deny our own. How often do we become reflexively defensive when someone calls something we've done or said racist? How many of us would agree with this statement: "'Racist' isn't a descriptive word. It's a pejorative word. It is the equivalent of saying, 'I don't like you.'" These are actually the words of White supremacist Richard Spencer, who, like Trump, identifies as "not racist." How many of us who despise the Trumps and White supremacists of the world share their definition of "not racist"?
>
> *Source*: *Kendi 2019, p. 8.*

Above, Ibram Kendi explains how today's racial ideologies allow for the simultaneous denial of racism and expression of racist ideas. Racial ideologies change over time because the needs and interests of the elite change. As Karl Marx wrote in *The German Ideology*, "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas." American racial

ideologies today allow people to openly spout racist ideas while claiming not to be racist. In this chapter, we consider how racial ideologies have evolved, as well as how they continue to reproduce and justify persistent racial disparities.

Chapter 3.1 Video

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[1] https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/donald-trump-i-am-the-least-racist-person/2016/06/10/eac7874c-2f3a-11e6-9de3-6e6e7a14000c_story.html

[2] https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/06/trump-racism-comments/588067/

Ideological Consistency and Change

The work of Patricia Hill Collins (2004) is useful for understanding ideological shifts. As she explains: "When ideologies that defend racism become taken-for-granted and appear to be natural and inevitable, they become hegemonic. Few question them and the social hierarchies they defend" (96). When Collins explains that racial ideologies are **hegemonic**, she means that they become so widely accepted that they become common sense.

Racism encompasses both racial **prejudice**—the belief that people belong to distinct races with innate hierarchical differences that can be measured and judged—and racial **discrimination**—the practice of treating people differently on the basis of their race. An ideology is more than an individual prejudice: it is a set of principles and ideas that embodies the interests of a societal group. A **racial ideology**, then, is a set of principles and ideas that (1) divides people into different racial groups and (2) serves the interests of one group. Ideologies are usually created by the dominant group and reflect the interests of that group.

Racial ideologies in the United States were established during the colonial era. They have since evolved over time from primarily a folk concept in the eighteenth century to a pseudoscientific concept in the nineteenth century, a scientific association in the twentieth century, and cultural explanations following the horrors of World War II. Today, many scholars of race describe the most pervasive racial ideology as **color-blind racism**, in which race is not explicitly acknowledged, but individual prejudices, acts of racial discrimination, and structures of inequality work to benefit White people (Bonilla-Silva 2013). Color-blind racism can be applied to almost any arena of society, from mass incarceration to the

educational gap between Black people and White people, and is used to explain racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics.

Chapter 3.2 Video

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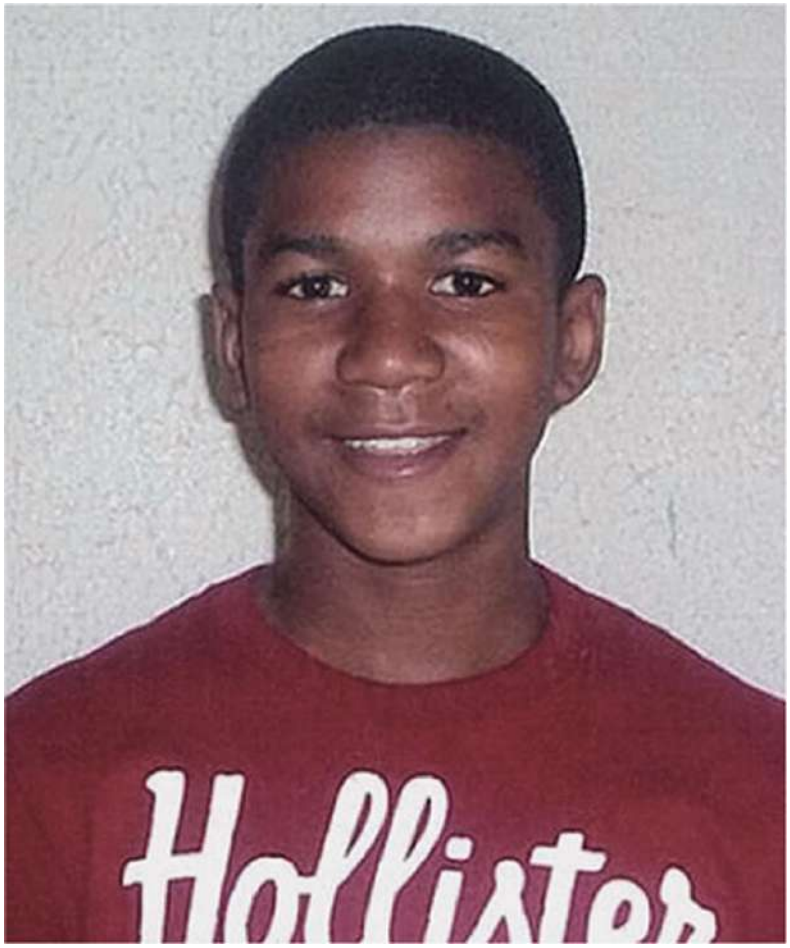
The case of Trayvon Martin (discussed in the Voices feature on page 68) raises several questions about racial ideology today. Was George Zimmerman's perception of Trayvon Martin shaped by the fact that Trayvon was a Black boy wearing a hoodie? As we will discuss in Chapter Five, the media feed us a constant stream of images that shape our beliefs. The media also perpetuate **stereotypes**, widely held but fixed and oversimplified images or ideas of types of people or things. One very common racial stereotype is that Black men who wear hoodies and baggy jeans are dangerous. Defenders of Trayvon Martin and his family argued that Zimmerman is racist, and Zimmerman was quick to defend himself by saying that he is not. However, George Zimmerman does not have to identify as a racist to be influenced by racial ideologies. That is how ideology works: it is so pervasive that we do not realize its influence on us.

VOICES

Trayvon Martin

On the evening of February 26, 2012, seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin was walking down the street in Sanford, Florida, carrying an iced tea and a bag of Skittles he had just bought at a convenience store. He and his father were visiting his father's fiancée, who lived in a gated community. Self-appointed neighborhood watchman George Zimmerman, who was twenty-eight years old, saw Trayvon and called the police to report what he perceived to be Trayvon's suspicious behavior: walking slowly in the rain, wearing a hoodie. The police told Zimmerman not to pursue Trayvon and that they would send a patrol car. Shortly afterward, however, a fight broke out between Zimmerman and Martin. It is unclear who started the fight, but a few moments later, Trayvon Martin lay dead on the sidewalk. When the police arrived, they took the body but did not take Zimmerman into custody. Zimmerman claimed self-defense and was not arrested.



George Zimmerman ended Trayvon Martin's life, yet was acquitted of murder.

Meanwhile, Trayvon's parents became worried when he did not return from the store, and they began to look for their son. They did not learn until two days later that Trayvon had been killed and that his killer had walked free. Trayvon's parents used social media to draw attention to their plight. Two weeks after Trayvon's death, they created a Change.org petition that eventually garnered over two million signatures. People around the country mobilized in response to what many viewed as a racially motivated crime, one downplayed by a racist police department that did not arrest George Zimmerman because he was a White man who had killed a Black boy. Six weeks after the murder, Zimmerman was charged with second-degree murder. He was placed in custody but released days later on a $150,000 bail.

On July 13, 2013, a jury acquitted George Zimmerman of both second-degree murder and manslaughter.

Source: Associated Press 2012.

In today's society, no one wants to be labeled a racist. This is the paradox of color-blind racism: how do we have racism without racists? In this case, an African American friend of Zimmerman's appeared on television and stated: "I'm a Black male, and all that I know is that George has never given me any reason whatsoever to believe he has anything against people of color." Other media reports pointed to the fact that Zimmerman has an Afro-Peruvian grandmother to buttress the claim that Zimmerman cannot be racist (Blodget 2012). The claim that one can't be racist because one has Black friends is common in a color-blind society (Bonilla-Silva 2013). However, the claim that one can't be racist because one has Black family members is more typical of Latin America (Golash-Boza 2010). This instance is one in which we may be witnessing a Latin Americanization of racial ideologies in the United States—an issue discussed further in Chapter Seven.

Finally, Trayvon Martin's killing reveals another aspect of our changing racial ideologies: George Zimmerman has a White father, a Peruvian mother, and an Afro-Peruvian grandmother. This set of facts raises two questions: Is Zimmerman White? And does his racial identity have anything to do with whether and how he carried out racially motivated actions? These questions and the complexities surrounding the case underscore the importance of racial ideologies as societal factors that continue to be in flux.

One indication of change is that Trayvon's killing was handled very differently than it would have been before the civil rights movement. A story from 1955 provides a point of comparison. In 1955, Emmett Till, an African American boy from Chicago, was visiting his relatives in Mississippi when he was tortured and brutally murdered by two White men. His murderers—Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam—were acquitted,

although they publicly admitted to the murder after the acquittal. In 1955, Bryant and Milam were protected by an outwardly racist justice system that refused to punish White people for killing Black people. In 2013, Zimmerman was acquitted even though he was responsible for Trayvon Martin's death. Zimmerman relied on color-blind self-defense laws, whereas Bryant and Milam relied on deep-seated racism that made it difficult for White jurors to convict a fellow White man for the killing of a Black man.

Social media enabled Trayvon's parents to spread the news quickly about his murder. Since then, several police killings have sparked widespread outrage, and again social media played a major role in spreading the news. On July 14, 2014, New York Police Department officer Daniel Pantaleo put forty-three-year-old Eric Garner in a chokehold and strangled him to death. A video of Garner's death circulated widely on social media, where Garner is heard saying, "I can't breathe." Despite widespread outrage, the grand jury did not indict Pantaleo. Three weeks later, John Crawford was shot dead in a Walmart by a police officer in Beavercreek, Ohio. Just four days later, on August 9, 2014, teenager Michael Brown was killed by officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri. The killing of Michael Brown led to nationwide protests that lasted nearly a year (Taylor 2016). These killings and others led to the creation of the **Black Lives Matter** hashtag and movement, which are part of a broad campaign against racial violence.

It is remarkable that some of the largest marches against racism and police brutality occurred while the United States had a Black president and a Black attorney general. The persistence of racist ideas and practices both during and following the Obama era provides insight into the deep-seated nature of racial ideologies in the United States.

To be sure, much has changed since the civil rights movement, yet some things are remarkably similar. Racial fears and racial injustice are still at play, though they have evolved. Later in the chapter, we will continue to consider what has changed in the United States since the 1960s. But first,

we will look at some of the most egregious instances of overt racism in the mid-twentieth century: segregation, the mass deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans, the internment of people of Japanese descent, and the Tuskegee syphilis experiment.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 3.1: Ideological Consistency and Change

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Overt Racism in the Mid-twentieth Century

The end of slavery did not end the oppression of people of color in the United States. Instead, after the brief but promising period of Reconstruction, the country witnessed the rise of discriminatory laws and the continuation of overt racial discrimination.

Segregation

Between 1896 and 1954, it was legal to deny African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans access to public schools and other facilities designated for White people. Such **segregation** laws ensured that White people had access to the best opportunities, education, housing, and even seats on the bus. The majority of states enacted some variant of these laws—often referred to as **Jim Crow**—prohibiting non-White people from marrying White people, living in White neighborhoods, riding in the same streetcars, attending the same events, and enrolling in the same schools. Jim Crow laws existed because the Supreme Court had ruled in 1896 in the case of ***Plessy v. Ferguson*** that state laws requiring racial segregation in public facilities were constitutional, as long as they were "separate but equal." The *Plessy* decision had meant that states were free to pass and enforce laws segregating schools, public transit, and any other public place.

A series of police killings led to the creation of the Black Lives Matter hashtag and movement, which are part of a broad campaign against racial violence.

Mass Deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans

In the early twentieth century, segregation was in place to keep White and non-White people in separate social spaces. During this same time, legislators developed immigration policies aimed at engineering the racial makeup of the United States. In California, although the growing agricultural sector depended on labor from China, Japan, and the Philippines, White nativists fought to pass legislation that would prevent Asians from

migrating to the United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, followed by implementation of the Asiatic Barred Zone in 1917, ended legal Asian labor migration to the United States. This law in turn created labor shortages just as agribusiness was expanding. Accordingly, agribusiness owners turned to Mexico to recruit laborers to come pick crops in the United States (Hernandez 2010). By 1930, there were about 1.5 million Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the United States (Balderrama and Rodríguez 2006).

The majority of states enacted some variant of segregation laws, legally denying non-Whites access to facilities designated for Whites only.

During the Great Depression (1929–1940), unemployment rates in the United States soared and poverty became widespread. In this time of fear and need, many Americans pointed their fingers at Mexicans and blamed them for the crisis. Anti-Mexican sentiment made it easy for many Americans to see the mass deportation of Mexicans as a viable measure to ease economic pressures. Balderrama and Rodríguez (2006) estimate that the vast majority of people of Mexican origin living in the United States at the time were deported in the 1930s: as many as a million Mexicans and their children (who were often U.S. citizens) were repatriated to Mexico during this decade.

Many of these deportations were conducted through raids on Mexican communities across the United States. Immigration agents went from door to door demanding verification of legal residence and arresting anyone who could not provide it. Agents even conducted raids in public places. In one instance in 1931, federal agents descended on La Placita, a public park in Los Angeles popular among Mexicans. Approximately 400 Mexicans were enjoying the afternoon in the park when the agents arrived, closed off the entrances, and ordered everyone present to line up and produce documentation of legal entry and residency. Those who could not produce documentation were detained for further questioning, and many were deported. These raids spread fear throughout the Mexican community and set the tone of tension for decades to come (Balderrama and Rodríguez 2006).

In 2003, the California Senate Select Committee on Citizen Participation held hearings on the repatriation of Mexicans, and the California legislature passed a bill authorizing the creation of a commission to explore and document the repatriation. The bill, however, never became law because of a veto by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (Johnson 2005). Notably, although there were undocumented Europeans throughout the United States during the Depression, this mass deportation campaign focused exclusively on Mexicans. During the 2016 presidential campaign, much of candidate Donald Trump's platform centered on immigration—with

promises to “build a wall” and “deport them all.” These slogans and threats of mass deportation are based on the same set of racial ideologies that led to Chinese exclusion and the mass deportation of Mexicans.

Internment of Japanese and Japanese Americans

In the early twentieth century, Japanese immigrants began to arrive in California and Hawaii to work in the agriculture sector. The Japanese often were skilled agricultural workers, and most had a primary school education. Many began as farmhands and hoped to ascend the agricultural ladder, first as sharecroppers, then as tenant farmers, and finally as landowners. However, as increasing numbers of Japanese immigrants became landowners and entered into direct competition with their former White employers in California, White Californians began to protest and insist on the passage of laws, such as the Alien Land Laws of 1917, which prevented people ineligible for citizenship (such as the Japanese) from owning land. The children of Japanese immigrants, however, who were born in the United States were eligible to own land, as they were citizens of the country by birth. As increasing numbers of second-generation Japanese immigrants came of age, White Californians searched for other measures to cut out the competition and prevent the Japanese from owning land (Aoki 1998).

The beginning of World War II and the emergence of Japan as an enemy of the state provided just this opportunity. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese navy attacked Pearl Harbor. Two months later, on February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which ordered that people of Japanese descent be detained and sent to internment camps. Japanese families, many of whom had lived in the United States for decades, were ordered to pack their things and evacuate their homes within forty-eight hours. Many families sold all their belongings and even their homes for a fraction of their value, as it was not clear when or if they would be able to return.

During World War II, the United States government imprisoned over 120,000 men, women, and children of Japanese descent—nearly everyone of Japanese origin living on the U.S. mainland. Over 60 percent of the people sent to internment camps were U.S. citizens, and they were kept in the camps for an average of two to three years (Nagata 1991; Ng 2002). The justification for the internment of Japanese and Japanese Americans was that the nation was at war with Japan. The United States was also at war with Germany and Italy, however, and very few Germans and Italians were detained; and they certainly were not rounded up and put into camps.

During World War II, Japanese families, such as the Mochida family, were ordered to evacuate and were placed in internment camps.

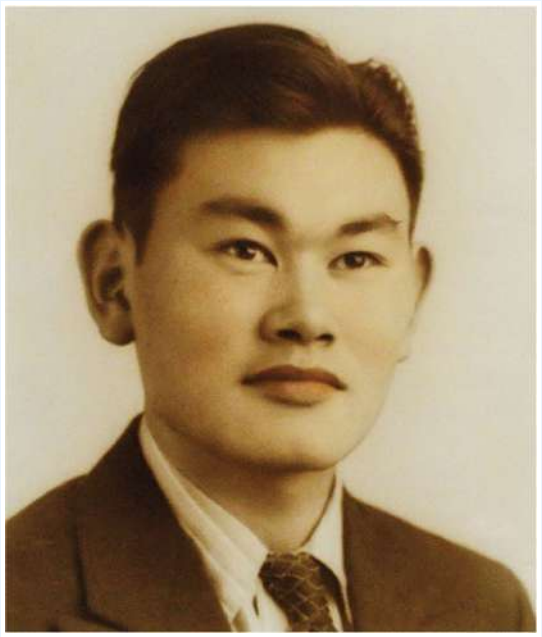
Selected Critical Moments in the Evolution of Racial Ideologies

1896	1917	1946	1954	1955	1955	1960	1961	1964	1965	
Plessy v. Ferguson	Asiatic Barred Zone Alien Land Laws	*Mendez v. Westminster*	*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*	Murder of Emmett Till	Rosa Parks refuses to give up her bus seat	Greensboro sit-in *Boynton v. Virginia*	First Freedom Ride	Civil Rights Act of 1964 bans discrimination in employment and public accommodations	Voting Rights Act restores voting rights to all citizens-Publication of the Moynihan Report	
1896–1954|Jim Crow laws										
		< 1929–1940 | Great Depression								
		< 1930–1935 | Mass deportation of Mexicans								
		< 1942–1946 | Internment of Japanese Americans								
		1932–1972 | Tuskegee syphilis experiment								

VOICES

Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu

Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu was born in Oakland, California, in 1919, to Japanese immigrant parents who ran a flower nursery. In May 1942, when Fred was twenty-three, his parents were sent to an internment camp. Fred, a U.S. citizen by birth, resisted. He changed his name to Clyde Sarah and had minor plastic surgery performed on his eyes so that he would look less Japanese. However, he was arrested just two weeks after his parents were placed in internment. Fred was charged with violating military orders and was convicted in September 1942. He was given five years of probation and taken first to a temporary camp in San Bruno, California, and then to a permanent incarceration camp in Topaz, Utah, where he and his family remained interned for the duration of World War II. Upon his arrest, Korematsu filed a case that led the U.S. Supreme Court to examine the internment order's legality, which it upheld in a 1944 decision. Korematsu continued to speak out against the injustice, and in 1980, President Jimmy Carter appointed a special commission to investigate and ultimately reopen the case. As a result, Korematsu's conviction was overturned in 1983; however, the 1944 Supreme Court ruling still stands.



Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu.

Sources: Ng 2002 and http://korematsuinstitute.org/institute/aboutfred/

The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment

The prevailing racial ideologies of the period that produced the internment of the Japanese and the mass deportation of Mexicans also permitted the severe mistreatment of African Americans. One example is the Tuskegee syphilis experiment. In 1932, the Public Health Service (PHS) and the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama recruited nearly 400 poor Black men for a study of the long-term effects of syphilis. They determined that the men had syphilis but did not give them this diagnosis, instead telling them they would be treated for "bad blood," a nonspecific, nonmedical term used to describe several illnesses. Unable to afford healthcare, these

men agreed to participate in the study in exchange for free medical exams, free meals, and burial insurance (Reverby 2009).

Rationalizing that the study participants would not normally have access to healthcare, given their poverty, the PHS doctors did not attempt to treat the men for syphilis. Instead, they used the study to determine from observation while they were alive and from autopsies once they were dead what untreated syphilis would do to the body (Reverby 2009). When the study began, there was no proven treatment for syphilis. The PHS doctors led the men to believe they were being treated for their illness by giving them aspirin and aromatic colored elixirs that had no medical purpose. In 1947, it became widely known in the medical community that penicillin would cure syphilis. Yet, because the Tuskegee scientists were interested in seeing how the disease spread and killed, they did not make penicillin available to the study participants.

During the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, Black men were diagnosed with syphilis, yet were never treated for it or told they had it.

The study encompassed a total of 624 participants and lasted four decades. It finally came to an end in 1972, when Peter Buxtun, an employee of the PHS, leaked the story to the media and sparked a national controversy. By that time, dozens of the men had died, and many of their wives and children had become infected with syphilis. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed a class-action lawsuit in 1973. This resulted in a $9-million settlement, which was divided among the study's participants, in addition to the promise of the provision of free healthcare and treatment to the men who were still living, as well as their family members who had been infected. The government, however, did not apologize formally for the unethical study until 1997 (Reverby 2009).

The Civil Rights Movement and the Commitment to Change

Segregation, the mass deportation of Mexicans, the internment of the Japanese, and the Tuskegee study occurred primarily because of the prevailing racial ideologies at the time. We can imagine that mass detention of Italian Americans would have caused much more controversy in the 1940s than the detention of Japanese Americans did and that an experiment similar to the Tuskegee syphilis experiment would have ended much sooner had the participants been White. Today, most Americans are appalled to learn of these dark moments in the country's history. This reaction is indicative of a change in attitudes about race over the past century—a change we can trace, in large part, to the civil rights movement.

The **civil rights movement** sought to end Jim Crow by first achieving legal equality and subsequently implementing laws that were already on the books. One of the first victories of the movement was the 1947 case of ***Mendez v. Westminster***, in which the federal circuit court in California ruled that segregating children of Mexican descent was unconstitutional. The *Mendez* case was a critical forerunner to the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision in the case of ***Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas***. With this decision, which overturned the ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson,* the Supreme Court determined that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal.

Despite these rulings, it would take more than a court decision for non-White people, particularly African Americans, to gain equal access to education and other state institutions. African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Native Americans organized a series of mass protests between 1950 and 1980 that would become part of

the civil rights movement. Notable legal victories of the civil rights movement include the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned discrimination in employment practices and public accommodations; the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which restored voting rights to all citizens; and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which outlawed housing discrimination. These legal victories came about in large part as a result of widespread civil disobedience carried out by African Americans and their allies in the 1950s and 1960s.

Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott

In the 1950s, African Americans in the Jim Crow South were forced to sit at the back of the bus; the front rows were reserved for White people. Even when the back of the bus was full, Black people were not permitted to sit in any empty seats in the front rows. If the White section of the bus was full, however, White people could demand that Black people give up their seats. Bus drivers and White passengers enforced these rules. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was seated in the Black section of the bus when the bus driver ordered her to move so that a White passenger could have a seat. She refused, and the bus driver called the police. Rosa Parks was arrested for her violation of the city code, which indicated that bus drivers could tell passengers where to sit. The arrest of the forty-two-year-old Parks sparked a bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, that lasted over a year. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., became the spokesperson of the boycott, which crippled the bus transit company's finances and eventually led to the repeal of laws permitting segregation on public transit.

Sit-Ins

On Monday, February 1, 1960, four Black college students bought a few items at the F. W. Woolworth store in Greensboro, North Carolina, and

then sat down at the lunch counter, which was reserved for White people. They asked to be served but were refused. They remained there for almost an hour, until the store closed. The following morning, they returned to the store, this time with a group of thirty African American students and occupied the lunch counter for about two hours. On Wednesday, they occupied nearly all of the lunch counter's sixty-six seats. Their actions caught the attention of the press, and soon hundreds of White protestors and Black supporters had rallied outside the store. By the end of the week, the Woolworth manager had decided to close the store. The Greensboro sit-in led to similar acts of civil disobedience across the country, primarily by Black youth, and eventually led to the creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Together with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the SNCC was central to the civil rights movement (Carson 1981). Both organizations participated in the Freedom Rides, which we discuss next.

Rosa Parks on a Montgomery bus the day after the segregation codes were repealed, with a White reporter behind her.

Freedom Rides

In 1960, the Supreme Court ruled in *Boynton v. Virginia* that segregation in interstate bus and rail stations was unconstitutional. Local authorities in the South, however, were unwilling to enforce integrationist laws.

In the summer of 1961, the **Freedom Riders** set out to test the Supreme Court's ruling. Six White and seven Black volunteers from CORE and SNCC boarded a public bus in Washington, D.C., headed south. These Freedom Riders traveled peacefully through Virginia and North Carolina. But when they reached the Rock Hill bus terminal in South Carolina, a group of White protestors attacked two of the Black Riders, who were waiting in the White section of the bus terminal. No one was seriously injured, and after the police arrived, the Riders were able to continue their journey. They did not see serious violence until they arrived in Anniston, Alabama, where a mob attacked one of the buses, smashing its windows and slashing its tires. The bus was able to escape, but the mob followed the bus, and, six miles later, the mob threw a firebomb into the bus. The Riders on this bus regrouped and continued on to Birmingham, Alabama, where another mob of White people was waiting. The mob severely beat many of the passengers when they disembarked. The police were late in arriving, and many of the passengers suffered serious injuries.

After the Birmingham attacks, the Riders were unable to find a bus driver willing to take them on to Montgomery. This first Freedom Ride ended early, but it did succeed in calling attention to ongoing segregation and brutality in the South. It also helped solidify the civil rights movement and gain traction for future Freedom Rides. And, on September 22, 1961, the Justice Department issued a ruling that prohibited separate facilities

for White people and Black people in train and bus terminals (Carson 1981).

Prior to these judicial decisions and legal changes, it was permissible in the United States to deny the vote to non-White people and to force non-White people to attend separate and inferior schools. In addition, the victories of the civil rights movement were won despite massive and violent White resistance. This was evident in the mob attacks on the Freedom Riders, but it happened at every turn. One of the most shocking instances occurred when African American children attempted to attend schools they were legally eligible to attend, and White residents responded with brutal attacks on them.

In the twenty-first century, we can no longer imagine White people openly protesting and hurling insults at an African American girl for attending an all-White school. On the other hand, schoolchildren shouted "build a wall" at Mexican American students in the aftermath of the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president (Sims 2016). White people no longer kill or harass Black people with exemption from punishment, although police officers are rarely punished for killing Black men (Williams 2016). What has changed? And—just as important—what has not?

Elizabeth Eckford on her first day at Little Rock Central High School on September 4, 1957, surrounded by White people yelling insults at both her and the U.S. marshals ensuring the implementation of laws permitting integration.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 3.2: Overt Racism in the Mid-twentieth Century

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Old versus New Racism: The Evolution of an Ideology

Many scholars make a distinction between old racism—which permitted the internment of the Japanese and the enslavement of Africans, for example—and a new but related ideology that perpetuates racism without such practices. In **new racism**, it is no longer acceptable to make overtly racist statements or to have overtly racist laws (P. H. Collins 2004; Bonilla-Silva 2013; Logan 2011; Harvey Wingfield and Feagin 2010). Racism did not disappear with the dismantling of slavery and Jim Crow laws, nor did the civil rights era mark the end of racism. Race scholars generally agree that the post–1965 era is distinct. Theorists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) explain that whereas the government could once be overtly violent toward non-White people, "in the post–civil rights era, the racial state cannot merely dominate; it must seek *hegemony*" (147) (emphasis in original). By this Omi and Winant mean that policymakers must seek to make the current racial order seem natural and normal, as it is no longer viable to have laws and practices that are explicitly racist.

Racial inequality persists today both because of our history—colonialism, slavery, and Jim Crow—and because of ongoing practices of discrimination and exclusion. The new racism is an outgrowth of past racial inequality; mass media and popular beliefs "help manufacture the consent that makes the new racism appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable" (P. H. Collins 2004, 34). Racial inequality in the United States has become naturalized. We have come to think of it as normal that African American men are overrepresented among prisoners and that White men are overrepresented among the elite, even though we would never accept laws that overtly discriminated against African Americans.

In the United States, most people do not consider themselves to be racist, and we have laws in place that prevent overt acts of discrimination. Despite this massive change in attitudes and laws over the past century, racial inequality persists. A study published in 2020 involved a meta-analysis of 16 different experiment-based studies of U.S. housing discrimination and nineteen ethnographic studies of mortgage lending discrimination. This analysis revealed evidence of persistent racial discrimination in the housing and mortgage market. Racial gaps in loan denial have only slightly declined since the 1970s, and racial gaps in mortgage costs have not declined at all since the late 1970s. Over fifty years since the passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act, racial discrimination in housing persists (Quillian, Lee, and Honoré 2020).

On almost any measure, Black and Latinx people are doing worse socially and economically than White people in the United States (Logan 2011; Masterson, Zacharias, Rios-Avila, and Wolff 2019). How do we explain the persistence of racial inequality despite the social stigma associated with being a racist? One way is by looking at how different forms of racism operate. This allows us to see how some forms of racism are more acceptable than others, even though all racial ideologies serve the same purpose: to explain, justify, and normalize racial inequality and injustice.

Another reason to examine racial ideologies closely is that despite trends that demonstrate widespread racial inequality, a few prominent exceptions make it seem as if racism is a problem of the past. Most notably, the United States had an African American president, has a Latina and an African American serving on the Supreme Court, and has a woman of African American and Indian descent serving as Vice-President of the United States. How do we explain these developments? Clearly, we need new ways to think and talk about race and racism. In this section, we will discuss different forms of racism and consider the extent to which these racial ideologies persist.

Biological Racism

Biological racism is the idea that White people are genetically superior to non-White people. This idea has its origins in the scientific racism of the nineteenth century, which set out to prove White people's superior innate intelligence. In the 1920s, the American lawyer Madison Grant argued that Nordics were the "master race" and that the United States should pass laws banning interracial marriages and ensuring the sterilization of inferior races. In the twenty-first century, it would be difficult to find people who openly advocate for the sterilization of Black people because of their biological inferiority. As explained in Chapter Two, these ideas have not completely disappeared.

In 1968, Arthur Jensen argued that Black people's lower scores on IQ tests than White people's were due to inherited instead of environmental traits. Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray picked up where Jensen left off in their 1994 book called *The Bell Curve*. In this book, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray argue that intelligence is quantifiable. For Herrnstein and Murray, as for a century of intelligence testers before them, the fact that Black people scored lower on intelligence tests than White people provided support for the idea that Black people are innately inferior to White people. More recently, Frank Miele and Vincent Sarich argued in their 2004 book *Race: The Reality of Human Differences* that races are a biological reality and that there are measurable intellectual differences among racial groups. Nicholas Wade made the same arguments in his 2014 book, *A Troublesome Inheritance* a decade later. The publication of *The Bell Curve*, *Race: The Reality of Human Differences*, *A Troublesome Inheritance*, and other books and articles in this vein provide evidence of the persistence of the belief that White people are genetically or biologically superior to non-White people.

Most academics reject these views and have criticized each of these books and articles as they have appeared. Biological racism still exists and continues to be perpetuated by some intellectuals but it is waning and is subject to virulent criticism whenever expressed.

Cultural Racism

Cultural racism is a way of thinking that attributes disadvantaged racial groups' lack of prosperity to their behavior and culture rather than to structural factors. Unlike biological racism, which claims that some races are inferior because of lower intelligence, cultural racism is the standpoint that a particular culture—African American or Latinx culture, for example—inhibits success.

The 1965 publication of a report by the American politician Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1927–2003) planted the seeds for many of the ideas inherent in cultural racism. The document, which has come to be known as the Moynihan Report, acknowledged the pervasiveness of poverty in the Black community and yet pointed to the breakdown of the Black family as one of the principal causes of this poverty. Moynihan argued that the history of slavery and racism had had detrimental consequences for the Black family. He made the gendered argument that the central problem of Black America was that there were too many single Black mothers who were incapable of raising children on their own. His proposed solution to Black poverty was restoration of Black men to their rightful place as breadwinners and heads of families. For Moynihan, the solution to Black poverty was to "fix" Black families. This stance—which ignores structural factors such as discriminatory employment policies and practices—is typical of cultural racism. Essentially, the cultural racism argument points to the behavioral patterns and culture of African Americans as the primary cause of their poverty. Cultural racism persists today. For example, pundits often blame Black people's educational failures on dysfunctional families or parenting styles rather than on failing schools and pervasive poverty.

Cultural racism also takes another form: teachers perceive children who invoke African American language and style as less intelligent than those who conform to dominant culture. Ann Arnett Ferguson (2001) found in her research in an elementary school that Black students were more likely

to get into trouble at school because of the way teachers and school administrators responded to their body language, oral expressiveness, manners, and styles. She found that children who conformed to White, middle-class cultural norms were less likely to get into trouble and more likely to do well in school, and that the use of African American forms of expressiveness in school was grounds for punishment. Ferguson also argues that when children are White or behave in a White middle-class way, they are perceived to be self-disciplined and good, while children who "behave Black" are perceived as troublemakers. Ferguson's findings point to the persistence of cultural racism: whereas White, middle-class children are rewarded for behaving in school as they and their parents do at home, working-class and poor Black children are punished for speaking and acting as their parents do.

A study done twenty years later had similar findings in relation to Black as well as Latino boys. In a two-year study of four urban elementary schools in Colorado, researchers found that Black and Latino boys were regularly labeled as truant and trouble-makers, hyper-policed and over-monitored, and disproportionately punished. This led to differential punishment for the same behavior. For example, there was an instance when a White female student and a Latino male student were punished for pushing another student. The White girl was asked to apologize to the class and administrators called the parent (as a form of discipline), while the Latino boy was suspended for two days. In another instance, a Latino boy was walking through the hallway in a zigzag manner imitating an airplane and was scolded and disciplined by a teacher: "What are you doing in the hallway? And why are you on the wrong side? You absolutely know better. I'm sick of dealing with you disrespecting our school and our rules. You're done mister. Come with me." The authors found patterns whereby when Latino boys engaged in harmless behaviors, such as standing up in class, not making eye contact, not sitting up straight, and literally not walking in a straight line, they were punished and scolded while these same behaviors did not receive these reprimands when White students engaged in them (Basile, York, and Black 2019).

American politician Daniel Patrick Moynihan argued in a 1965 report that the breakdown of the Black family was a principal cause of poverty in the Black community. This culturally racist stance ignores structural factors such as discriminatory employment policies and practices.

Cultural racism also affects other racialized groups in the United States. Latinas are often portrayed as "pregnant breeders" who plan to have "anchor babies" in the United States (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1995). Asians feel the brunt of the "model minority" stereotype—the myth that Asians are smarter, harder-working, and more successful than other minorities. And Native Americans are perceived alternatively as "savages" or "wise men." The racialized stereotypes of Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos and Latinas are discussed further in Chapter Four.

Color-Blind Universalism

Dr. Martin Luther King's dream of a day when his children "would be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character"

calls for a world in which skin color is no longer the basis for discriminatory treatment. Many liberals argue that **color-blind universalism**, or color-blind liberalism—the idea that we should ignore skin color—provides the best framework for shaping a world without racial discrimination. People who promote color-blind universalism recognize that racial inequality is a problem in the United States but contend that the best way to remedy racial inequality is through universalist programs that help everyone, regardless of race.

David Cochran (1999, 17) argues that "color-blind liberalism begins with the claim that the color of an individual's skin is a morally arbitrary fact that should make no difference in the way he or she is treated." This thinking seems to be in line with King's dream. The problem is that we live in a society in which skin color *is* important. Ignoring skin color won't make inequalities based on skin color disappear. Ironically, to achieve King's dream of a color-blind world, we can't just pretend that skin color is not important. Skin color and cultural groups based on skin color are real and important factors in U.S. society, and they can't simply be wished away.

Over the course of the twentieth century, we have seen racial ideologies evolve from biological racism to cultural racism to color-blind universalism. Biological racist views attribute racial inequality to inherent differences among races. Cultural racist views blame racial inequality on cultural differences. In contrast, color-blind universalism is not a racist ideology in and of itself, but it allows racial inequality to persist. We will explore this point further in the next section.

GLOBAL VIEW

Cultural Racism in Peru

Cultural racism is not unique to the United States. In Peru, people freely express negative stereotypes with regard to Black and indigenous people. When I interviewed people in Lima, Peru, in 2007, many of them spoke of Black and indigenous people as having "un bajo nivel cultural" ("a low cultural level"). For example, Jorge, a forty-year-old Peruvian dentist, said that if he were to bring a Black woman home, his neighbors would say, "How is it possible that he is with a Black woman, because being Black means that you are of a lower cultural level, a lower professional level, a lower status."

When I asked José Manuel, a professional in his mid-thirties, how he would feel if his daughter decided to marry an indigenous man, he responded that the indigenous person would be unlikely to be civilized. Many middle-class Peruvians were uncomfortable with the idea of intermarriage and expressed their discomfort through cultural racism.

Many Peruvians also associated Black people with criminality. Fernanda, a working-class woman in her mid-forties, told me: "People of color here in Peru can be characterized as delinquents, as gang members, because, generally, it is a marginalized race. … The majority of people of color here are … bad people; they live in poor neighborhoods and are criminals as well; they are in jail."

Through a variety of widely accepted stereotypes, the presumed cultural and intellectual inferiority of Black and indigenous peoples in Peru is used to justify their low position in the social hierarchy. Since cultural racism is very much ingrained in Peruvian society, expressions of cultural racism are often not perceived to be racism at all, but simply to be factual statements. Thus, Peru has its own brand of cultural racism.

Source: Golash-Boza 2010.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 3.3: Old Versus New Racism: The Evolution of an Ideology

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Color-Blind Racism

Sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva has built on these ideas of cultural racism and color-blind universalism to offer a framework for understanding how widespread racial inequality persists, even though no one wants to be called a racist. In his work, Bonilla-Silva (2013) presents the notion of color-blind racism, a racial ideology that explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics, such as market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, or cultural differences. This racial ideology ignores or marginalizes people of color's distinctive needs, experiences, and identities. Bonilla-Silva (2013) argues that although race is a social construction, the idea of race is real in a social sense and has produced a racial structure that systematically privileges White people.

Four Types of Color-Blind Racism

How is it possible to have widespread racial inequality when most White people claim there is no racism and that they are not racist? Bonilla-Silva offers an explanation in his book *Racism Without Racists*. His research team interviewed White people and asked them questions about their views on race in the United States. He found that White people use four types, or "frames," of color-blind racism to justify and reproduce racial inequality.

Bonilla-Silva calls the first frame **abstract liberalism**. This frame involves using liberal ideas such as equality of opportunity or freedom of choice to explain or justify racial inequality. For example, when presented with the fact that African Americans still live in underserved, poorer neighborhoods, a person using this frame would explain this inequality by

saying it is a choice. As the argument goes, nothing prevents people living in poorer neighborhoods from leaving, so their situation is not because of racism but because of individual choices. This response, however, ignores the structural factors that both created segregation and perpetuate it.

The second frame is **naturalization**. This frame permits people to explain racial phenomena as if they were natural. The explanation for segregation would be that people like to be around others who are like them. Again, the thinking is that segregation is not because of structural factors, but because it's normal or natural.

The third frame is **cultural racism**. This frame relies on culturally based explanations, such as the idea that Black people live in poor neighborhoods because they don't work hard enough to get out of the ghetto. A person can use cultural racism by saying something along the lines of, "Black people like Barack Obama who work hard get ahead, yet most Black people can't get out of the ghetto because they are too lazy to find work." Statements like these ignore the fact that high unemployment rates among Black men in urban areas are due to a host of structural factors that make it extraordinarily difficult for them to obtain employment, as discussed in Chapter Nine.

The fourth and final frame is **minimization of racism**. This frame suggests that discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting life chances for people of color. When confronted with facts indicating that racism is a real problem in society, those who use this frame would respond with comments such as "racism rarely happens" or "most employers are not racist."

Rhetorical Strategies of Color-Blind Racism

In addition to the frames mentioned in the last section, Bonilla-Silva found that White people used specific **rhetorical strategies**, or ways of

expressing racist ideas without being labeled as racists. Bonilla-Silva argues that because post–civil rights racial norms do not permit the open expression of racial views, White people have developed concealed ways of voicing them.

As Bonilla-Silva found, one common rhetorical strategy is to preface discriminatory claims with "I am not a racist, but. …" Alternatively, White people would say, "Some of my best friends are Black, but. …" For example, when asked if they would mind if their daughter married a Black man, a White person would respond, "I am not a racist, but I don't think interracial marriages work." Or they might use another rhetorical strategy called projection, according to which they would respond: "I don't mind if my daughter marries a Black man, but you have to think about the children." These rhetorical strategies allow White people to indirectly express discriminatory or prejudiced ideas.

In his research, Bonilla-Silva found that people use color-blind racial ideology in everyday speech patterns to *justify* racial inequality. This ideology influences rhetorical strategies, stories, and customary behaviors that allow White people to explain why racial inequality is not due to racism. In addition to justifying racial inequality, color-blind racism *reproduces* racial inequality by permitting people to engage in discriminatory actions without being labeled as racists.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 3.4: Color-Blind Racism

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The New Politics of Race

As we have seen throughout this chapter, racial ideologies constantly change and adapt but do not disappear. Over the course of the twentieth century, they evolved from biological racism to cultural racism to color-blind universalism and color-blind racism. In each instance, these ideologies worked to justify and explain racial inequality. The malleability of racial ideologies permits them to evolve as society does.

Barack Obama became the first Black president of the United States after winning the 2008 election. In 2016, Donald Trump was elected to the presidency on a platform that galvanized White supremacists—the number of hate crimes in 2016 hit an all-time high (Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, 2017). Let's take a closer look at these two historic elections to evaluate what has changed and what has not.

What did Obama's election reveal about racial ideologies? It did not signal the end of racism in the United States, despite what some commentators claimed. Did it mean that White Americans were able to see past race, or did Americans embrace his Blackness?

Sociologist Enid Logan (2011) contends that Obama won the 2008 election because he was able to shape an image of Blackness that was palatable to a broad cross-section of Americans. This strategy required Obama to distance himself from African American leaders such as Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, and Jeremiah White (Logan 2011; Nopper 2011). Obama's ability to claim this particular form of Blackness was crucial to his success. As a presidential candidate, Obama had to walk a fine line—one where he neither rejected Blackness, thus alienating African Americans, nor claimed Blackness too blatantly, thus alienating White voters. Sociologists Adia Harvey Wingfield and Joe Feagin (2010) argue

that Obama's marriage to African American Michelle Obama was critical for his acceptance among African Americans: it permitted him to claim Blackness through his marriage while he simultaneously emphasized his biracial status.

Inauguration Day, 2017. Whereas Obama sought racial conciliation, Trump campaigned using messages that were at times overtly racist.

Racial politics undoubtedly played a significant role in Obama's election to the presidency. But the election of a Black president should not be taken as an example of how America had moved beyond race. Instead, it showed the continuing importance and evolution of racial ideologies. Obama was able to become president not because we were living in a post-racial society, but because he distanced himself just enough from his Blackness.

One way Obama leveraged race was by using color-blind universalism to move his agenda forward. For example, Obama did not favor programs directed at alleviating Black male inner-city unemployment, even though

Black unemployment rates have consistently been double that of White people (Taylor 2016). Instead, he advocated for job recovery programs that would help all Americans. Table 3-1 uses the example of Black unemployment rates to show how racial ideologies affect our approaches to social problems. Obama rejected biological and cultural racism, while embracing color-blind universalism.

TABLE 3-1 Ideological Explanations for Higher Unemployment Rates among African Americans

Racial Ideology	Argument	Solution
Biological racism	African American men are genetically inferior to White people and thus have trouble getting and keeping jobs.	Do nothing. Let natural selection prevail.
Cultural racism	African American men are unemployed because they are unable to present themselves appropriately to employers.	Teach African American men appropriate demeanors.
Color-blind universalism	The disparity exists, but the solution is to improve the overall economy, not to focus on African Americans specifically.	Implement universal solutions that do not target one racial group.

Whereas Obama sought racial conciliation, Donald Trump campaigned, using messages that were at times overtly racist, on a promise to "make America great again." Trump appealed primarily to blue-collar White people frustrated with the lack of economic progress in the United States, as well as to others frustrated with the state of politics in the country. Supporters of the alt-right—a far right-wing White supremacist movement—found Trump's messaging particularly appealing. Trump redirected White Americans' fears of economic insecurity to fears of terrorism and immigrants. He also used thinly veiled racial rhetoric, although he has denied he is racist and has said that he has a "great relationship with the Black people" (O'Connor and Marans 2016).

We can use Table 3-1 to consider how Trump's ideology differs from Obama's. One of the most egregious types of racism is biological racism—the idea that White people are genetically superior to non-White people. Donald Trump is reported to have said that "laziness is a trait in Black people. It really is, I believe that. It's not anything they can control" (O'Donnell and Rutherford 2016). The idea that Black people are innately lazier than other races is a clear example of biological racism.

Another, more common form of racism is cultural racism, which involves the belief that a particular racial or ethnic culture can inhibit or promote success. Trump has also made statements in line with this thinking. He stereotyped Jewish people as good negotiators (O'Connor and Marans 2016). He referred to Mexican immigrants generally as rapists and other criminals (Ye He Lee 2015). The ideas that Jewish people are characteristically good at business and that Mexicans are criminally inclined because of their culture are clear examples of cultural racism.

Trump has also demonstrated subtler applications of this ideology. In an interview regarding the Trump University fraud lawsuits, he stated that the U.S. District Judge Gonzalo Curiel had a conflict of interest because he was of "Mexican heritage" (Kendall 2016). Trump had made policy proposals that would limit immigration, but the idea that a Latinx judge is necessarily pro-immigration is an example of cultural racism. Based on the judge's ethnic background, Trump presumed to know his political beliefs.

As president, Trump put his racist beliefs into practice. For example, the Trump administration approved twenty-three times as much money for victims of Hurricane Harvey—which hit Houston—as it did for the victims of Hurricane Maria—which hit Puerto Rico. As noted earlier, Donald Trump described nations with majority-Black populations as "shithole countries" and voiced the concern that Nigerians would never "go back to their huts" if let into the United States.[3] These xenophobic and racist feelings toward Nigerians may have been the basis for Trump's 2020 decision to ban Nigerians from the United States—in additional to

nationals from Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Sudan, and Tanzania. This travel ban was an extension of an earlier ban on immigration from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen—a ban collectively referred to as the "Muslim ban."

From President Clinton to Bush to Obama to Trump, racial inequality has persisted. The specificities have fluctuated, but the overall picture has changed relatively little. Racial inequality is embedded in the fabric of our nation and, by extension, in its politics.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 3.5: The New Politics of Race

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

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[3] https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/06/trump-racism-comments/588067/

Conclusion and Discussion

Reading the stories of Japanese internees and of violence against African Americans in the Jim Crow South, we cannot deny that we have come a long way. However, today there are more African American men in prison or jail or on probation or parole than were enslaved in 1850 (Alexander 2010). In this light, the trajectory toward racial justice does not seem so straightforward.

Signs that say "No Dogs, Negroes, or Mexicans" are no longer displayed prominently in storefronts, nor are there designations for "Coloreds" and "Whites Only" at water fountains. Instead, we usually see more subtle indications of continued racism through statements such as "I'm not a racist, but …." And we see the open denigration of other groups. For example, during the U.S. presidential campaign, Donald Trump stated: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. … They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists" (Moreno 2015). Here, Trump qualifies his statement by saying that some Mexican immigrants are "good people," but the message is clear: he believes that many of them are not.

The discourses have changed, as have the outcomes. In our society, calling someone a racist is a serious insult. However, a racial ideology that upholds the superiority of White people and ensures that White people have access to the best resources persists, no matter who sits in the Office of the President. This is the paradox of racism in the post–civil rights era.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 3.6: Conclusion and Discussion

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

3.1 How do racial ideologies both persist and change?

- Racial ideologies in the United States have since evolved over time, from primarily a folk concept in the eighteenth century to a pseudoscientific concept in the nineteenth century to color-blind ideology today.

Review

» What is the difference between prejudice and discrimination?

» What are racial ideologies, and how have they changed over time in the United States?

» How is the killing of Trayvon Martin connected to that of Emmett Till?

Critical Thinking

» How have racial ideologies become hegemonic, and what does that mean?

» Why do racial ideologies shift over time?

3.2 In what ways was 1920 to 1965 an era of overt racism?

- The early to mid-twentieth century in the United States was the setting for many cases of egregious racism, including segregation, the mass deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the Tuskegee syphilis experiment.

Review

» What were the Jim Crow laws?

» What was the motivation for the mass deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the mid-twentieth century?

» Why were Japanese Americans interned during World War II?

» What was the Tuskegee syphilis experiment?

Critical Thinking

» What are contemporary parallels to the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, the mass deportation of Mexicans in the 1930s, and the internment of Japanese Americans? What has changed, and what has not?

» It is difficult to imagine that the United States would reenact the mass internment of Japanese and Japanese Americans. However, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, U.S. government officials interrogated thousands of people from the Middle East. Do you think there are parallels between the internment of Japanese during World War II and the interrogation of Middle Easterners after September 11? Do you think racial ideologies were at play in either instance? Why or why not?

3.3 **What role did the civil rights movement play in promoting change?**

- During much of the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans and others in the United States rallied together to demand civil rights. Landmark events include the Montgomery bus boycott, sit-ins, and the Freedom Rides.

Review

» How were the Jim Crow laws dismantled?

» Who was Rosa Parks?

» Who were the Freedom Riders?

Critical Thinking

- Which strategies of the civil rights movement were most successful? Why?

3.4 What are some of the forms that racism takes today?

- Since the era of the civil rights movement, racism has continued to plague our society. It has changed over time, however, so that today we more often see examples of cultural racism than biological racism.
- Color-blind universalism has become pervasive, allowing racial inequality to persist.

Review

- What are some ways that racial ideologies have evolved since the 1960s?
- What is the difference between old and new racism?
- What is the difference between biological and cultural racism?
- What is color-blind universalism?

Critical Thinking

- Provide an example from an encounter or conversation you have had with someone that is indicative of biological racism, cultural racism, or color-blind universalism.

3.5 What is color-blind racism, and how does it perpetuate inequality?

- Color-blind racism involves four types, or “frames,” according to sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism.
- This racial ideology ignores or marginalizes the distinctive needs, experiences, and identities of people of color.

Review

- What is an example of each frame of color-blind racism?

Critical Thinking

» Explain in concrete terms how White people use a frame, in Bonilla-Silva’s terms, to justify and reproduce racial inequality. Use a specific example from the readings, your personal experiences, or your service learning experiences to demonstrate the frame.

3.6 What did the elections of Presidents Obama and Trump reveal about racial ideologies in the United States?

- The election of Barack Obama to the presidency changed racial dynamics in the United States, yet racism still persists.
- The election of Donald Trump galvanized White supremacists.

Review

» How did Obama’s Blackness play a role in his political career?

» Who found Trump’s message compelling?

Critical Thinking and Discussion

»

How have racial dynamics changed in the United States between the Obama, Trump, and Biden presidencies?

Talking about Race

Have you ever heard someone say “racism is a thing of the past”? If that statement were to come up in conversation, what have you learned from this chapter that might help you counter the idea that racial inequality or racial discrimination has gone away? In what ways is the current era unique? What are some parallels between today and 100 years ago, and how far have we come as a country?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 3.7: Check Your Understanding

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

LIST OF KEY TERMS

abstract liberalism

Biological racism

Black Lives Matter

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas

civil rights movement

color-blind racism

color-blind universalism

Cultural racism

cultural racism

discrimination

Freedom Riders

hegemonic

Jim Crow

Mendez v. Westminster

minimization of racism

naturalization

new racism

Plessy v. Ferguson

prejudice

racial ideology

rhetorical strategies

segregation

stereotypes

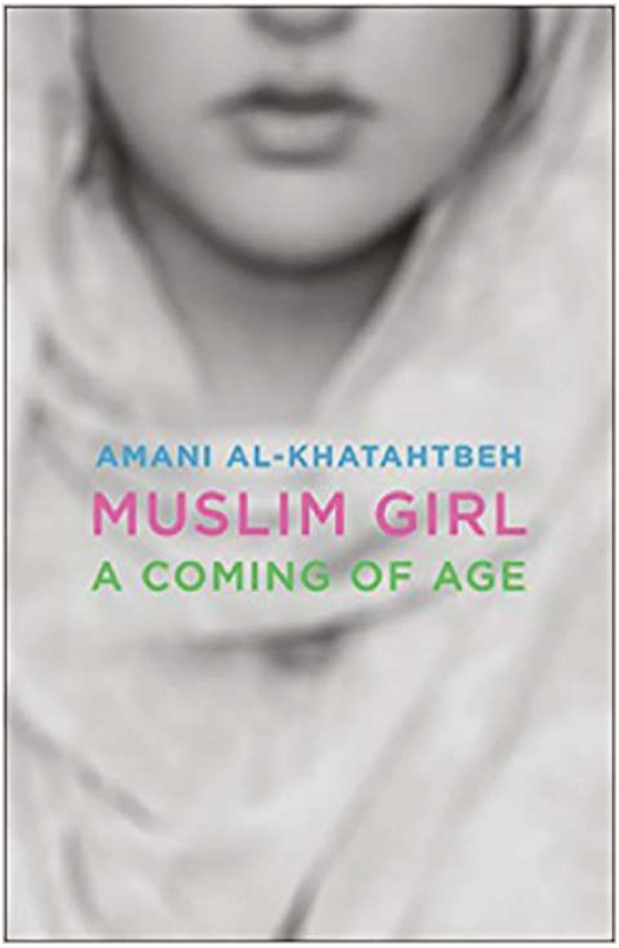
4
Sociological Theories of Race and Racism

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

Mr. Prejudice. Horace Pippin. 1943. Oil on canvas, 18-1/8 × 14-1/8 in. (*The Philadelphia Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY*)

As You Read

- **4.1** How is individual racism linked to institutional inequality?
- **4.2** What are the key similarities and differences between systemic racism and structural racism?
- **4.3** What is racial formation, and how does this concept inform our understanding of racial inequality?
- **4.4** What does the perspective of indigenous studies reveal about racism in the United States today?
- **4.5** How is Islamophobia related to racism?
- **4.6** In what ways do race, class, and gender oppression work together?



Amani Al-Khatahtbeh is a Muslim woman who grew up in New Jersey. She was eleven years old in September 2001 when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. That was the same year Amani heard her first racial slur. Another student said to her: “Your people throw rocks at tanks.” Amani learned at a young age that she would be judged not only on her own merits, but on those of her “people.” The September 2001 attacks (known as 9/11) would have lasting implications for Amani, her family, and her community, as she explains in the following excerpt. Amani also describes how she feels about the election of Donald Trump to the presidency, in light of his calls to ban Muslims from the United States.

I’m not really sure I understood what was going on when 9/11 happened, but I was old enough to feel the world shift on its axis that day and change everything forever. I remember it so vividly because it was confusing and chaotic, and the first time since my grandfather from Jordan

passed away that I was enveloped by sadness all around me, yet this time it applied to everyone. That day has become crystallized in my memory not just for how harrowingly scary it was—how we didn't know what would come after that—but also because I deeply believe that my generation of millennial Muslims has, whether we like it or not, come to be defined by it.

We have become commodified in every demeaning way: Our bodies have become political targets in the service of returning America to the imaginary greatness it once enjoyed, which I can only assume was during the days of outright racial comfort and superiority of white people; at the same time, our bodies have been reprinted, sold, contorted to fit the only cool narrative society can accept, sold to us Muslim women in a way that makes us eagerly jump to celebrate the shattering of another glass ceiling.

…

Abed Ayoub, legal director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, issued a statement in the winter of 2015, almost immediately after Donald Trump's call for a ban on Muslim immigration, stating that levels of Islamophobia at that time were the worst they had witnessed since immediately after 9/11. My heart hurt. I could not imagine a generation of little girls living through a Trump era—the terrifying possibility of a Trump generation—and enduring the same unsettlement that my friends and I did growing up, not just from navigating their own identities, but their surroundings as well. Enough is enough. The cycle needs to stop. In this case, it's less of a cycle and more of an uphill battle in which we toil. We're climbing toward the light with exceptional weight on our backs, digging our heels into the dirt of the past to gain our way to the top, only to slip—no, be completely knocked down—by an uncontrollable, newly emerging force that causes us to tumble all the way

> back to where we started, much to the jeers and cheers and additional trips of the bystanders around us. Everyone can see it happen, and complacency is a killer.
>
> *Source: Al-Khatahtbeh 2016, 3–4.*

Above, Amani Al-Khatahtbeh describes the significance for her community of both 9/11 and the Trump presidency. Muslim Americans became hypervisible after 9/11, as anti-Muslim sentiment grew (Salaita 2006). The discrimination that Muslim Americans face is just one manifestation of deeply embedded racism in our society.

Racial discrimination is pervasive in the contemporary United States. We see it in the criminal justice system, where Black and Latinx people are several times more likely to go to prison than White people (Gottschalk 2015). We can find racial inequality in employment as well: audit studies have shown that Black people are less likely than White people to be interviewed and, once interviewed, to get a job. Once Black people have jobs, they are less likely to be promoted. Black business owners have more trouble obtaining contracts. In education, the picture is equally bleak. Many schools in the United States are racially segregated, and the quality of education is lower at primarily Black and Latinx schools. Within schools, White students are given preferential treatment. When White parents visit schools, they receive more attention from staff members, and teachers are more likely to recommend White students for gifted programs (Nicholson-Crotty et al. 2016). Sociologists and other researchers have carried out study upon study demonstrating that inequality and discrimination exist. Yet how do we explain it? This is where **sociological theories of racism** come into play. Sociologists use evidence from their studies to develop explanations for how racial inequality is created and reproduced. These explanations are known as *theories*.

Sociological theories in the field of racial and ethnic relations look both at how racism works (Bonilla-Silva 1997, 2013; Feagin 2001) and at how

people are racialized (Omi and Winant 1994; Cornell and Hartmann 2007). In this chapter, we will look at several sociological theories of race and racism to help us understand how people are categorized into racial groups and the consequences of those categorizations. Before we begin an examination of these theories, what do you think? How would you explain the fact that Black men are several times more likely to go to prison than White men? Do you think Black people commit more crimes? Do you think police officers spend more time policing Black communities? Do you think police officers are biased toward African Americans? All of these hypotheses can be tested through scientific studies. Together, these hypotheses about how racism works lead to theories of racism that help us understand how our society operates.

Individual Racism and Institutional Racism

Racism includes both discrimination and prejudice. As we discussed in Chapter Three, racial discrimination involves practices or actions that reproduce racial inequality, and racial prejudice refers to racially biased beliefs. For example, an employer can think African Americans are less competent than White people—this belief constitutes racial prejudice. When that employer decides to hire a White person instead of an equally qualified Black person, that decision may be considered racial discrimination. Both prejudice and discrimination are widespread in U.S. society.

Many Americans, even those who do not believe they are racially prejudiced, have implicit biases that operate at the level of the subconscious. It is hard to avoid these biases because of the barrage of racialized messages we receive in the media and through our personal networks. Racial prejudice and implicit biases inevitably lead to racial discrimination. (Curious about your own implicit bias? Take the Implicit Association Test at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit.)

Individual Racism

Discrimination can occur at the individual level when one person discriminates against another. Audit studies have consistently shown that Black people are less likely to be interviewed for jobs than White people and that Black and Latinx people face housing discrimination on a regular basis (Feagin 2001; Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009; Auspurg, Schneck, and Hinz 2019). Racially discriminatory actions by individuals

such as not calling back an interviewee for a job because of his race or telling a person on the phone that the apartment is taken because he or she has a Spanish accent or lives on a reservation constitute **individual racism**. Individual acts of racial discrimination and bigotry are commonplace in our society and help to reproduce racial inequalities.

How widespread is individual racism? Researchers have consistently found that racial discrimination is pervasive. One study of Department of Defense employees revealed that nearly half of the Black employees had heard racist jokes in the previous year (Feagin 2001). Another survey conducted by Feagin and McKinney (2003) revealed that 80 percent of Black respondents had encountered racial hostility in public places. One African American secretary detailed the consequences of constant discrimination as follows: "I had to see several doctors because of the discrimination, and I went through a lot of stress. And, then, my blood pressure … went on the rise" (82). This woman, like many other African Americans interviewed in this study, displayed high levels of stress as a result of her mistreatment in the workplace and consequently developed health issues. In another study, Dwanna Robertson (2015) found that Native Americans constantly face the consequences of negative stereotypes about them. One of her participants told her, "I hear things like: 'Show me an Indian, I'll show you a drunk Indian.' 'Indians are lazy'" (130). A study by Raúl Pérez and Geoff Ward (2019) pointed to the prevalence of racist joking among police officers. One of the examples they discuss comes from Ferguson, Missouri, just prior to the 2014 police killing of the young Black man Michael Brown. That joke refers to an abortion by a Black woman as an event that leads to a reduction in crime.

It is remarkable that individual racism is widespread in a society that usually condemns overt acts of racism. If a television announcer were to make a racially charged or overtly racist statement such as "African Americans are inherently more violent than White people," we can be sure that the following day, critics would forcefully condemn the racist statement. If racial discrimination is frowned upon, how can it be so widespread?

One way that individual racism persists, even in a society that decries racism, is through **racial microaggressions**—daily, commonplace insults and racial slights that cumulatively affect the psychological well-being of people of color. The consequences of these microaggressions can be severe, and studies of African Americans, Latinx people, and Asians have uncovered the continued prevalence of microaggressions. One study of African Americans on college campuses, for example, found that White students and professors consistently doubted the academic potential of African Americans. One Black student was presumed to have cheated after getting an "A" on a difficult math quiz. Another Black student found that people assumed his scholarship was for sports, when, in fact, it was for his academic achievements. These students reported that the cumulative effect of these slights was to make them tired, discouraged, and frustrated—especially since they had expected more from their professors and peers (Solorzano, Ceja, and Yasso 2000). These microagressions can have severe consequences: a recent study among African American college students found that certain types of racial microaggressions were associated with elevated levels of suicide ideation (Hollingsworth et al. 2016).

African Americans are not the only group to experience microaggressions. In a study of Asian Americans' experiences of discrimination, Derald Wing Sue and his colleagues found that Asian Americans experienced a wide variety of microaggressions, ranging from the assumption of foreignness to exoticization of Asian women to invisibility. For example, Asian Americans reported that White Americans consistently asked them questions such as "Where are you from?" or made comments such as "You speak good English," when the only indication that they might not be from the United States was their Asian appearance. Other Asian Americans pointed out that people presumed they were good at math and that men presumed Asian women would be submissive lovers. Asian Americans also reported that people presumed that they didn't face discrimination. The Asian Americans in this study recounted that the constant barrage of microaggressions angered them but that they also felt

disempowered to respond, as any single event could seem inconsequential by itself (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, and Torino 2007). These experiences are commonplace: a recent study of 152 Asian Americans found that 78 percent of them experienced microagressions during a two-week period (Ong, Burrow, Fuller-Rowell, Ja, and Sue 2013).

Kevin Nadal and his colleagues conducted a study of multiracial people's experiences of microaggressions and found them to be pervasive (Nadal et al. 2011). These studies of both Asian Americans and multiracial individuals reveal that well-intentioned White people often deliver microaggressions because of their insensitivity toward and ignorance about non-White people. This can be seen, for example, when a White person speaks Japanese to a Chinese American or tells a biracial woman with a Black mother and a White father that being half-White makes it easier to get along with her. In the first instance, the White person may be trying to show a cultural interest in Asian people, although her act simultaneously tries to erase the differences between Japanese and Chinese people and reasserts the presumed foreignness of Asian Americans. In the second instance, this assertion reinforces White supremacy by implying that the biracial woman is better than other Black people because she has a White parent.

Microaggressions and other forms of individual racism continue to pose a problem on college campuses. Studies have consistently found that individual acts of bigotry are commonplace (Harper and Hurtado 2007). In a study of 2,500 college students published in 2018, Levchak found that 90 percent of Black students and 80 percent of Asian students reported experiencing a microagression. Notably, the study took place at both a primarily White institution and a racially diverse one, and students reported high levels of microagressions at both places. A qualitative study of thirty Mexican college students found that they experienced multiple microagressions (Ballinas 2017). Educational professionals consistently made them feel as if college was not for them. Over half of the students reported having their academic capabilities, accomplishments, or goals questioned. One student reported, "every exam it was the same thing, he

[his eleventh-grade history teacher] thought I was cheating because I would score 97, 98, good grades. … So he would always be monitoring me. And in my work he would mark it really specific, he would take off all these little points and I would talk to my [White] friends in class and ask if he took off for them … he wouldn't take off half the stuff he took off me" (Ballinas 2017: 398). Other students reported being steered toward community colleges and away from "good four-year universities" by White high school guidance counselors—often being told some variation of, "oh that's [four-year universities are] for rich White people, why don't we look into a community college?" (Ballinas 2017: 398).

VOICES

Microaggressions

Individuals who have had the following experiences and consider them to be racial microaggressions posted these reports on the website microaggressions.com. How do you feel as you read these reports? What would you say if you overheard such comments? What would you say if someone directed one of these comments at you?

Often when I have dinner at people's houses, they ask me if I would prefer chopsticks, regardless of the meal!

I am a registered nurse and always get told that I speak English so well. I was born in Australia and I am of Filipino background. I don't think about my appearance until a patient or their family member points it out, and they are quite amazed/baffled that someone who appears Asian "speaks so well" and could be considered a "real Australian."

The presumption that Asian Americans use chopsticks at every meal is based on an idea of inherent cultural differences. We don't see these same presumptions applied to third-generation Italian Americans or Irish Americans

I always get asked to be an interpreter for patients who are not native English speakers, specifically for those of Asian background. Because I am of Asian background as well, there is this assumption that I speak every language in Asia or that there is only one language/country in Asia. Unbelievable.

"Sorry, that must be my black coming out." [Said by] my biracial friend (African American and Mexican). Whenever she does or says something negative she blames it on the "Black" side of her. Makes me feel angry, belittled, resentful.

I express that my brother attends a private university. Immediately a girl in the car responds in a very sure voice "Oh, he plays football?" This is the second time this has happened. As if a

young black male can only attend a prestigious private college on a football scholarship.

"You're really unintimidating for a black guy." Said by white male. I am a freshman in college. Made me feel as though I should be intimidating because I'm black.

Ohmygawd. You're totally not what people think of when they think of Muslim women. You're so cool.

Wow. Don't get the Muslim mad, guys. We don't want a blown-up school tomorrow.

Substitute teacher: Quiet down! You're acting like a bunch of wild Indians!

Oh, but you're Latin, so you must love the heat! While discussing the summer weather. I'm from Bogotá—the average temperature is 60°F. I feel like nobody in the States bothers to understand that Latinos are not just one monolithic entity.

Source: The Microaggressions Project.

Institutional Racism

In the late 1960s and 1970s, sociological thinking on racism moved away from a focus solely on prejudice and individual acts of racism toward an institutional approach. Carmichael and Hamilton (1967) introduced the idea of **institutional racism**—the policies, laws, and institutions that reproduce racial inequalities—in their book *Black Power*. They explained that the high rates of Black infant mortality in Birmingham, Alabama, and the prevalence of Black families in slums are best understood through an analysis of institutional racism.

In an essay published in 1979, Carol Camp Yeakey posited that research on institutional racism in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s represented a marked departure from previous research, which had not focused on "the attributes of the majority group and the institutional

mechanisms by which majority and minority relations are created, sustained, and changed" (Yeakey 1979, 200). Yeakey then argued that racism operates on both a covert and an overt level and takes two related forms: "The first is on an individual level. The second is on an institutional level where racism as a normative, societal ideology operates within and among the organizations, institutions, and processes of the larger society. And the overt acts of individual racism and the more covert acts of institutional racism have a mutually reinforcing effect" (200).

GLOBAL VIEW

Microaggressions in Peru

Monica Carrillo Zegarra is an Afro-Peruvian artist, scholar, and activist. She finished university in Peru and then went on to Oxford to complete a degree in human rights. In Peru, she founded an organization called LUNDU, which organizes and empowers Afro-Peruvian youth.

Monica describes what happened to her on one not untypical evening in Lima, Peru. On New Year's Eve 2006, she left her home in a middle-class neighborhood in Lima to go shopping and had the following interactions:

- 5 p.m.: A man walking down the street holding his five-year-old son's hand points at Monica and says, "Monster, monster. Do you see the monster?" The boy laughs and responds, "Daddy, she is burned."
- 6:05 p.m.: Monica walks toward an outdoor market where women are selling earrings. The women begin to laugh. One of them says: "There goes your sister." The other responds: "Are you crazy; she's your sister." And they all laugh.
- 6:10 p.m.: Monica is walking down the street, and a taxi driver begins to follow her. He opens the door and says, "Negra: get in." When she responds defensively, he says: "You should be happy I am looking at a woman like you."

In her essay, Monica continues to describe the microaggressions she consistently experiences. Men and women, girls and boys, shout "negra" at her when she leaves the house. Men presume she is sexually available and offer unsolicited invitations for sexual intimacy. On one occasion, within just thirty minutes, Monica counts eleven people who verbally assault her as she walks down the street. Monica explains that racial aggressions are commonplace in

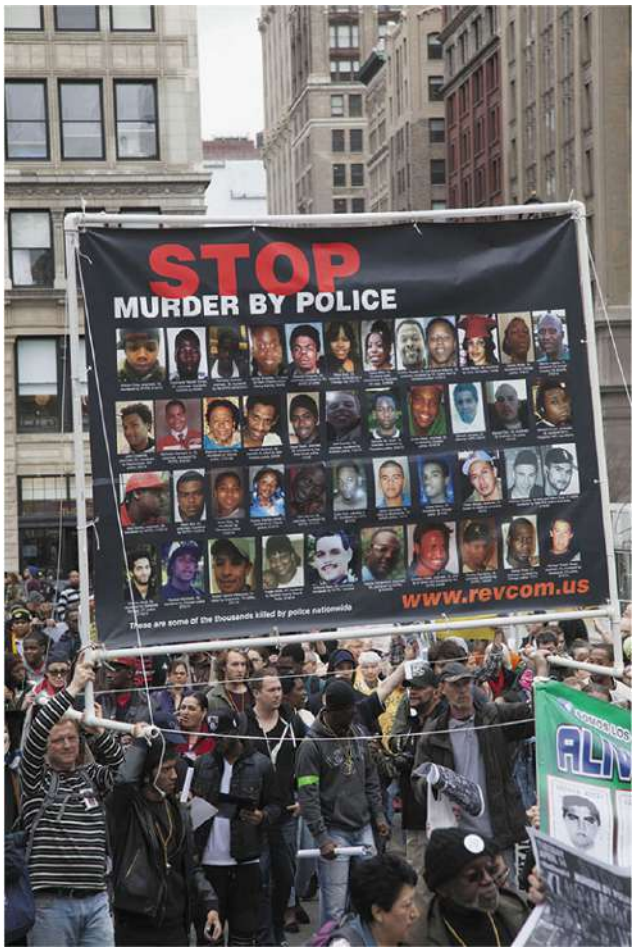
Peru because Peruvians feel as if they can hurl insults at Afro-Peruvians with impunity. As an artist and activist, she struggles with the best ways to confront this reality and to maintain a sense of humanity in the face of constant dehumanization.

Source: Carrillo Zegarra 2010.

Monica Carrillo gathering signatures in the 2012 campaign “Sign up against racism” in Peru.

Understanding the framework of institutional racism is essential for understanding racism in the United States, as racism amounts to more than individual acts of discrimination. An individual police officer may have prejudicial beliefs that Black people are more likely to be violent than White people. Based on this prejudice, the officer may be more likely to racially discriminate against Black people and more likely to use more physical force against Black people than White people. What do we call it, though, when this kind of discrimination happens repeatedly? An analysis

of the 1,217 U.S. police shootings between 2010 and 2012 found that young Black males are twenty-one times more likely to be killed by police than are their White counterparts (Gabrielson, Grochowski Jones, and Sagara 2014). Although African Americans only make up 12 percent of the U.S. population, they accounted for 47.3 percent of wrongful convictions between 1989 and 2012 (Free 2017). How do we explain these disparities?



Protestors calling for the end of police brutality march through New York in 2015. Young Black men are twenty-one times more likely than young white men to be killed by police.

In overwhelmingly Black neighborhoods in Washington, D.C., and Chicago, nearly three-quarters of Black men have been incarcerated. In some states, Black men go to jail on drug charges at fifty times the rate of White men. In seven states, Black people constitute over 80 percent of

drug offenders sent to prison (Alexander 2010). These extraordinary disparities cannot be explained by individual acts of discrimination alone.

Instead, it makes sense to argue that racial discrimination has become institutionalized in the criminal justice system. This is because racial discrimination happens at every level of this system. The laws are written in ways that discriminate against Black people—the disparities in sentences for possession of crack and possession of cocaine are one example (Alexander 2010). Police officers are consistently more likely to pull over and arrest Black men than they are White men. Black people are more likely to get harsher sentences or even the death penalty (Gottschalk 2015). When we look at the system as a whole and see that the criminal justice apparatus more harshly affects Black people than White people, and when we can see that racial discrimination is consistent and systematic, we can say that the criminal justice system is a prime example of institutional racism. Institutional racism also exists in other institutions, including the educational system, housing, and the labor market.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 4.1: Individual Racism and Institutional Racism

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Systemic Racism and Structural Racism

Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton (1967) developed the idea of institutional racism in the 1970s. Since that time, many thinkers have enhanced their conceptual models and developed more complex and integrative ways of thinking about institutional racism. In 1969, Samuel Robert Friedman (1969, 20) defined structural racism as a "pattern of action in which one or more of the institutions of society has the power to throw on more burdens and give less benefits to the members of one race than another on an on-going basis." In 1979, Carol Camp Yeakey wrote about "the interrelated and cumulative nature of systemic or institutional discrimination and racism," the way racism works in "social systems" (203), and explained:

> *The resource allocation of city schools; residential segregation and housing quality; the location, structure, and placement of transport systems; hiring and promotion practices; academic underachievement of racial and ethnic minority youth; availability of decent health care; behavior of policemen and judges; a legal order that incarcerates more minorities than majorities; stereotypical images prevalent in the media and school curricula; price gouging in ghetto stores; morbidity, mortality, and longevity rates; lack of political clout and effective legislative representation—these and a myriad of other forms of social, political, and economic discrimination concurrently interlock to determine the status, welfare, and income of the racial and ethnic minorities of color.*

Unfortunately, nearly forty years later, we can make the same assessment with regard to institutional racism. Fortunately, scholars of race and racism continue to refine these theories and approaches. In this section, we explore some of these current approaches.

Systemic Racism

Sociologist Joe Feagin defines **systemic racism** as "a diverse assortment of racist practices; the unjustly gained economic and political power of White people, the continuing resource inequalities; and the white-racist ideologies, attitudes, and institutions created to preserve white advantage and power" (2001, 16). He explains that systemic racism encompasses daily microaggressions, deep-seated inequalities, and anti-Black ideologies. Taken together, systemic racism includes:

- Patterns of unjust impoverishment of non-White people
- Vested group interests of White people to maintain racism
- Omnipresent and routinized discrimination against non-White people
- The rationalization of racial oppression
- An imbalance of power whereby White people are able to reproduce inequality through control of major political and economic resources

Systemic racism theory gives primacy to history and to anti-Blackness: Feagin explains that systemic racism exists because of the history of the United States as a slaveholding nation. Racial oppression was foundational to and is deeply ingrained in our nation's history. The legal system of the United States—based on the Constitution and Supreme Court cases—is rife with examples of entrenched racism. Systemic racism in history and the present day has created a "White racial frame" that shapes individuals and institutions in the United States. Feagin emphasizes that racism and racial inequality were created by White people and continue to be perpetuated by White individuals and White-owned institutions (2001).

The unjust enrichment of White people through slavery and privileged access to resources since the beginning of the United States is at the core of an understanding of systemic racism. This unjust enrichment has led to unjust impoverishment of African Americans. Past and continuing discrimination has created a situation in which African Americans have

been denied resources many White people have come to take for granted, including good jobs, great schools, and nice neighborhoods (Feagin 2001; Feagin and McKinney 2003). The pervasiveness of everyday acts of discrimination, combined with a legacy of unequal distribution of resources throughout every aspect of U.S. society, constitutes systemic racism.

Structural Racism

Proponents of the idea of **structural racism** take a slightly different approach in their analysis of racial inequality. As we have seen, institutional racism focuses on practices within institutions, and systemic racism focuses on accumulated acts of racism across history and throughout one's lifetime. Structural racism differs by pointing to interinstitutional interactions across time and space. For example, racial inequality in housing leads to racial inequality in schooling, which in turns leads to racial inequality in the labor market. Across generations, this chain of events becomes a cycle because parents who are less well positioned in the labor market cannot afford housing in the better neighborhoods, which means that their children will be less likely to attend better schools. A structural understanding of racism underscores the "structural relationships that produce racialized outcomes" (powell 2008, 798). This emphasis on the relationships among structures of institutional inequality provides new insights into how racial inequality is reproduced across generations.

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva proposes the concept of **racialized social systems**. By this term, he means "societies in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories" (1997, 469). Bonilla-Silva places particular emphasis on racial hierarchies and points to how these hierarchies influence all social relations. Societies that have racialized social systems differentially allocate "economic, political, social, and even psychological

rewards to groups along racial lines" (442). Bonilla-Silva's framework reflects a structural racism perspective because he focuses on structures of inequality, hierarchies, and social relations and practices that reproduce and justify racial disparities.

VOICES

J. F. “Smitty” Smith

In his book, writer, historian, and organizer J. F. “Smitty” Smith chronicles his seven-day journey evacuating his home in the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans, Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina. The following excerpt connects his experiences, along with the experiences of other evacuees he encountered while evacuating, to the historical legacies of racism in New Orleans.

Something happened during this hurricane like no other. The hurricane and its aftermath took several turns for the worst. As the storm approached, the winds hit the city fast and furious. Canals were breached, the floodwater rose to historic heights, lives were lost, and property damage reached unprecedented levels. The repeated requests for emergency assistance from the state and federal governments were sent to various agencies, never to be heard from again.

One of the largest displacement of people in the history of the country was now in full bloom. These helpless people, the children, the elderly, the sick, and all others who were in dire need and unable to fend for themselves, were delivered into the jaws of these unforgiving destructive forces by the inaction of the authorities.

As we were evacuated from one place to another, within the city fear and panic were beginning to evidence themselves in the faces and behaviors of the people. These frightening situations seemed to produce explosive conversations, which were everywhere. There were bad encounters with conspiracy advocates who were pushing their theories all over the place to anyone who would bend to their demands.

However, it appeared the most sober conversations came from those evacuees with an overarching belief that the Black people’s predicament is deeply rooted in the historical relationship between

the government (the White Ruling Class) and the poverty-stricken Black population.

The constant talk we heard was that the White Ruling Class of New Orleans had laid plans long ago to reduce the majority Black population to a manageable political minority. These evacuees often referred to themselves and all the other displaced as “refugees.” They strongly supported the notion that Katrina had created the perfect conditions under which the Ruling Class would continue their plan of dismantling the Black community.

Source: J. F. Smith 2012, 8–9.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Systemic Racism and Hurricane Katrina

The images broadcast on national television in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina made it clear that those hardest hit were African Americans. Images of poor, dark-skinned African Americans wading through floodwaters made their way into living rooms across the United States.

Sociologists Kristen Lavelle and Joe Feagin (2006) have responded to the questions many people asked after seeing these images: Why were poor Black people the primary victims of Hurricane Katrina? Was it because they were Black or because they were poor? Lavelle and Feagin argue we must look at race and class simultaneously, as they are inextricable. In New Orleans, and across the United States, race and class are intertwined because of a long history of institutionalized racism.

People wade through floodwaters on their way to the Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana, looking for shelter in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

There are large numbers of African Americans in southern Louisiana because of the history of slavery in the United States—New Orleans was the principal slave market in the United States in the 1700s and 1800s. By 1840, there were over 23,000 slaves in New Orleans and about 20,000 free Black people. Although slavery ended in 1865, inequality persisted through “separate but equal” statutes. For nearly 100 years, Black people in New Orleans were prevented by law from living in White neighborhoods and attending White schools. When schools were officially desegregated, most White families moved out of integrated school districts or sent their children to private schools. Black families were left with underfunded schools, diminished job opportunities, and limited choices for housing.

By the time Hurricane Katrina hit in the summer of 2005, two-thirds of the residents of New Orleans were Black, and one-quarter of the city’s residents lived below the official poverty line. Forty percent of the Black residents of the city earned less than the salary required to meet the poverty line, giving New Orleans the highest rate of Black poverty in the country. When the hurricane hit, 60 percent of poor Black people lacked access to a car, making it difficult for them to follow evacuation orders. Only 17 percent of poor White people in the city did not have access to a car.

Lavelle and Feagin argue that “this unjust impoverishment takes place within a continuing framework of well-institutionalized racism” (13). They contend that we can best understand why the primary victims of Hurricane Katrina were Black and poor when we consider the long history of institutionalized racism in the United States.

For Discussion

1. Is systemic racism a useful framework for understanding Hurricane Katrina? Why or why not?
2. Why do Lavelle and Feagin argue that race and class are inextricable?

3. Why do you think segregation persisted after laws that enforced segregation were overturned?
4. What evidence do Lavelle and Feagin provide for contemporary and historical systemic racism in New Orleans?

Source: Lavelle and Feagin 2006.

Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro (2006) offer a keen analysis of the role of structural racism in reproducing wealth inequalities. They explain that wealth inequality "has been structured over many generations through the same systemic barriers that have hampered Black people throughout their history in American society: slavery, Jim Crow, so-called de jure discrimination, and institutionalized racism" (12–13). Oliver and Shapiro (2006) point to three instances of structural inequalities that work together: (1) Black people transition from slavery to freedom without a material base, (2) the suburbanization of White people and the ghettoization of Black people, and (3) contemporary institutional racism in the lending and real estate markets. These three inequalities work together to create a situation in which the median net worth of one White household is ten times that of a Hispanic or Latinx household and thirteen times that of a Black household (Kochhar and Fry 2014) (Figure 4-1).

FIGURE 4-1 Median net worth of White, Latinx, and Black households, 2014
Source: Pew Research Center (2014).

Oliver and Shapiro (2006) explain how laws and policies, even those that do not mention race, can still work to enhance racial inequality. Our tax policies provide one example. In the United States, capital gains are taxed at a lower rate than income, and tax deductions are offered for home mortgages. These policies are ostensibly designed to help the middle class and encourage economic growth. However, they provide many more advantages to White people than to Black people because Black people rarely have capital gains income, are less likely to own a home, and, when they do own a home, have houses that are worth less than White people's houses (Shapiro 2004). These state policies work to widen the wealth gap between Black people and White people by providing advantages to those who are already wealthier and who are more likely to be White.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 4.2: Systemic Racism and Structural Racism

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Racial Formation

As discussed in Chapter One, racial categories were created during the time of slavery, genocide, and colonialism. Nevertheless, we still use categories such as White, Black, Asian, Native American, and, more recently, Latinx and Arab to make meaning of our social world. In Latin America, *mestizo* (White/Indigenous) and *mulato* (White/Black) as well as other racialized categories continue to shape social life. One key aspect of racial categories is that they are flexible and can accommodate distinct social realities. The emergence of "Arab" and "Latinx" as racialized categorizes in the United States is an example of how racial ideologies can evolve and change the racial structure itself.

Whereas analyses of structural and systemic racism focus on racism itself, Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) consider racial meanings). They introduce the concept of **racial formation** to help us understand how racial dynamics work in the United States. Omi and Winant define racial formation as "the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed," and as a "process or historically situated project" (56). They argue that the state (i.e., national government) is the primary site where race is constructed and contested. According to this theory, the state can reproduce or alleviate racial inequality through its institutions and policies. Omi and Winant explore "how concepts of race are created and changed" and argue that "concepts of race structure both state and civil society" (vii).

A consideration of American Indian identity sheds light on how racial formations can work. Prior to the colonization of the Americas, the racial category "American Indian" did not exist. European settlers created this category based on their understanding of the term. Europeans then passed laws that endowed this category with meaning. Today, American

Indian identity is both highly contested and legally defined. Of course, any individual can claim that their grandmother was a Cherokee princess—and many do—but most of these people are not members of a federally recognized Indian tribe. American Indian identity is regulated by federal and tribal laws. Each American Indian tribe sets its own criteria for tribal citizenship. About two-thirds of all tribes require that members prove their "blood quantum" or a specific degree of Indian ancestry in order to enroll. Other tribes require people to prove they are a direct descendant of a tribal member in order to enroll. In addition, there are an array of federal laws that determine who is an American Indian and who is not. The racial formation process of Native Americans is a prime example of the role of the state in creating racial categories as well as determining who can be included and what rights should be accorded to people in this category. Through a process of racial formation, both the federal government and tribal governments define who is and who is not Native American (Garroutte 2003).

Chapter 4.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

When Omi and Winant's book was first published in 1986, it was a welcome change from earlier works that studied race as some variation of ethnicity, class, or nation. Instead, Omi and Winant presented race as a topic worthy of study in itself. Their groundbreaking work has greatly enhanced our understanding of how race works in the United States.

Omi and Winant (2015) draw from the Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci to argue that racial dynamics in the United States have changed from domination to hegemony. Domination refers to direct rule by coercion, whereas hegemony involves rule by both coercion and consent. For example, Omi and Winant contend that the United States prior to the civil rights era could be characterized as a racial dictatorship in which racial

inequality was enforced through domination. During slavery and the Jim Crow era, White domination was legal, state-enforced, and difficult to contest openly. In the current era of racial hegemony, racial stratification and White dominance are achieved more subtly through coercion and consent. Omi and Winant argue that the United States is undergoing a slow, gradual, and contentious transition from a racial dictatorship to a racial democracy.

Omi and Winant argue that, as the United States has moved away from racial despotism towards racial democracy, race-based resistance has taken different forms. The enslavement of people of African descent is an example of a system of racial despotism, in which enslaved people had no rights. Under this system, one form of resistance was for enslaved people to run away. In some cases, these runaways formed maroon communities. These examples of resistance—running away and forming autonomous communities—are a response to the unavailability of options for change within the system. In contrast, democratic societies generally provide some space for opposition. Insofar as the United States has moved away from racial despotism, the forms of resistance have also changed. Today, activists in Black Lives Matter, for example, fight for police reform—for change within the system. These movements for change look very different from maroon communities and other forms of resistance that happened during the period of racial despotism.

Omi and Winant (2015, 106) also put forward another important argument: that race is a master category—"a fundamental concept that has profoundly shaped, and continues to shape, the history, polity, economic structure, and culture of the United States." For Omi and Winant, race has become the template on which other inequalities in the United States are created. They contend that race has profoundly shaped other forms of oppression—including those based on class, gender, sexuality, and immigration status. In this way, they give centrality to race as a category that structures opportunities and advantages in the United States.

The concept of racial formation blends an understanding of social structures with an understanding of cultural representations. Omi and Winant use the concept of a **racial project**, which they define as being "simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources (economic, political cultural along particular racial lines" (2015, 125). Racial projects give meaning to racial categories through both cultural representations and social structures. For example, Doris Marie Provine and Roxanne Lynn Doty (2011) argue that the criminalization of immigrants through intensified immigration policy enforcement is a racial project. In this example, the state targets immigrants and draws attention to their vulnerable status. The increased law enforcement and resulting media attention reinforce the marginalization of immigrants as a racialized group.

For Omi and Winant, not all racial projects are racist. Instead, a racial project is defined as racist if it "creates or reproduces structures of domination based on racial significations and identities" (2015, 128). Not all racial projects are racist. Projects are racist only when they reproduce structures of domination and hegemony. For example, one could argue that the criminalization of Latinx immigrants is a racist project because it reinforces the marginalized status of this racialized group. Omi and Winant argue that every state institution is a racial institution. They don't go so far as to say that every state institution is *racist*. This is because they believe the state can also use racial schemas to promote racial equality. Affirmative action policies are an example of a government policy that attempts to redistribute resources in a more racially equitable way—making it a racial project, but not a racist project.

Another example of a racial project occurs when legislators pass redistricting laws that redistribute voting power along racial lines. If the redistricting laws end up limiting the voting power of African Americans, this would not only be a racial project, but a *racist* project because the laws exacerbate racial inequality. At the same time, if a coalition of community members came together to fight for redistricting laws that

would distribute voting power more fairly, this would also be a racial project. It would not, however, be a *racist* project because the goal would be to distribute votes fairly across racial lines. *Racial* projects attempt to redistribute power and resources along racial lines. *Racist* projects attempt to redistribute power and resources in ways that reinforce or exacerbate existing racial disparities. Racial projects become racist only when they enhance racial disparities.

Omi and Winant have received a substantial amount of scholarly attention, mostly positive, for their theory of racial formation. However, they have also received critiques. One critique they have received is that they do not put racism at the center of their analyses (Feagin and Elias 2013; Wellman 1993; Bonilla-Silva 1997). David Wellman (1993, 10) contends that the racial formation perspective does not analyze the advantages White people receive from racial projects, thereby ignoring the question of who benefits from systems of racial domination. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (1997) posits that this perspective relies too much on ideological/cultural processes and does not pay enough attention to the ways that racialization is embedded in society. Feagin and Elias (2013) offer three critiques of Omi and Winant's work, contending that the scholars:

1. offer abstractions that are less useful than direct critiques holding White people accountable for racial inequality;
2. do not go far enough to expose the depths of racism in the United States; and
3. overlook many of the parallels between Jim Crow racism and present-day racism.

In their first critique, Feagin and Elias (2013) argue that Omi and Winant do not provide "a significant and explicit discussion of White peoples' central and powerful role in shaping the racial hierarchy" (10). Instead of delineating who upholds the racial hierarchy, "terminology such as 'the state' obscures activities of the mostly white (male) decision-makers who

control the US political economy" (10). Feagin and Elias's (2013) second critique is that Omi and Winant do not expose the depths of racism in the United States. They argue that, in the racial formation perspective, race is primarily a question of individual prejudice, and they contend that Omi and Winant give primacy to struggles over racial meanings instead of struggles over power and resources. Feagin and Elias's (2013) third critique is that racial "formation theory presents a relatively optimistic view of racial progress, especially over the last half-century" (19) and that "Omi and Winant often seem to view white racism today as something tacked onto an otherwise healthy, progressing U.S. democracy" (12). Feagin and Elias contend that Omi and Winant present too rosy a vision of racial progress in the United States and need to take a closer look at the lack of gains made by African Americans since the civil rights movement. Fundamentally, Feagin and Elias are asking if it is true that the United States is undergoing a transition from a racial dictatorship to a racial democracy.

Another important critique of Omi and Winant (2015) revolves around their treatment of gender. Priya Kandaswamy (2012) argues that racial and gender formations are not isolated processes—that racial formations are gendered and gender formations are raced. Kandaswamy uses the example of the 1996 welfare reform to make her case. Although race is never explicitly mentioned in these laws, which dramatically reduced public aid, racialized and gendered concepts like "sexual promiscuity" and "bad mothering" are part of the discourse surrounding these laws. Kandaswamy (2012, 33) thus contends that "representations of gender work to signify and constitute racial categories, or, in Omi and Winant's words, that gender itself operates as a racial project."

Kandaswamy (2012) explains how the idea that race is historically produced and constantly changing can complicate our understanding of intersectionality, as it forces us to look at how race and gender "are constituted in and through each other" (26). Race is a socially constructed idea that has developed in conjunction with ideas about gender, class, and sexuality. In this examination of welfare policy, Kandaswamy explains

concretely how the adoption of an intersectional perspective can enhance a racial formation perspective.

Kandaswamy (2012) argues that interconnected ideas of gender, sexuality, race, and class influence public opinions about who deserves state assistance and who does not. Although the 1996 welfare reforms did not mention race specifically, the writers of the legislation had no qualms about promoting heteronormative ideas (the assumption that heterosexuality is or should be the norm), as the first line of the 1996 law is: “Marriage is the foundation of a successful society.” The 1996 law explicitly embraced marriage, was based on a public discussion of family values and personal responsibility, and was designed to reform the “welfare queen,” a stereotypical figure who is imagined to be a Black woman who depends on the state for her survival, and, in doing so, threatens the fabric of society. The “welfare queen” is an example of a racial and gendered formation that shapes perceptions both about Blackness and about womanhood. Kandaswamy’s critique of Omi and Winant is that, because racial formations are gendered, an intersectional approach is more useful than one that focuses primarily or exclusively on race.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Examining Legitimized Racism against Indigenous Peoples

Sociologist Dwanna Robertson (2015) questions the assumption that overt racism is no longer socially acceptable in the United States. She argues that this claim does not hold true for indigenous peoples in particular. Whereas other groups may face primarily covert or color-blind racism, "Natives still routinely experience overt racism in the form of racial epithets like 'redskin,' 'injun,' and 'squaw' and horribly distorted depictions of Natives as mascots" (113).

Because of the widespread nature of racist discourse and practices toward indigenous people, Robertson contends that racism against Native Americans has been "legitimized" (115). By this term, she means that racist images, mascots, and stereotypes are so pervasive that they have become acceptable.

Many race scholars contend that overt bigotry is relatively rare and has been replaced with more polite forms of racism. Yet Robertson argues that this is not the case for Native Americans. On television, Native Americans see a football team called the Redskins. On Halloween, they see gross caricatures of their culture. In schoolyards, they overhear children "playing Indian." On Columbus Day, they witness a celebration of their genocide. Every day, Native Americans hear negative racial stereotypes, such as that they are drunks or savages.

Robertson interviewed forty-five Native Americans, many of whom told her about their experiences of overt racism. Will, a Chickasaw man, explained that many people have negative views of Native Americans: "We are considered drunks. Lazy, dirty drunks. They look at the reservations, and they see all the old cars just broke down and the shanty shacks, and a lot of people feel that the Indians get money all the time, and that's why they live in poverty, because they take their money and drink all the time" (131).

Tom, a Penobscot man, shared similar experiences. He said, “I hear things like: ‘Show me an Indian, I’ll show you a drunk Indian.’ ‘Indians are lazy.’ We won’t get jobs because we get everything for free. They think we all get casino money and government entitlements. … But I still have to work, and I can’t even drink a beer without people throwing stereotypes around” (130).

Native women experience racial discrimination particular to their gender and sexuality. Maggie, a Maliseet woman, described the trauma she experienced: “As I got into puberty, white boys seemed to have some kind of idea that I was ‘wild’ and would be more willing to have sex with them.… Boys would grab me and say stuff and call me ‘Pocahontas.’ They didn’t treat other [White] girls on their street that way” (132).

Eva, another Native woman in Robertson’s study, recalled being mistreated as a child as well. She explained: “I remember being pushed in the pool before, called squaw or dirty squaw. But I also remember [hanging out] with a close friend of mine and her friend once, and because I was darker skinned I was accused of being dirty. Because when you’re darker, obviously on your elbows and your knees you have darker skin and she’s like, ‘Why are you so dirty? Why don’t you clean yourself?’” (135).

Robertson’s research makes it clear that Native Americans experience overt racism in many forms. She argues that this racism has been normalized and institutionally legitimized, rendering it invisible both in public and in scholarly discourse.

For Discussion

1. What is legitimized racism? Can the concept be applied to groups other than Native Americans? Why or why not?
2. Compare and contrast the concept of legitimized racism to another form of racism discussed in this chapter.

Source: Robertson 2015.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 4.3: Racial Formation

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White Supremacy and Settler Colonialism

What if we consider present-day racism in the United States from the perspective of indigenous studies? From this perspective, we are forced to contend with questions related to the meaning of White control of lands that once belonged to Native Americans. What would the end of racism look like for indigenous peoples? We can imagine that Native Americans have an entirely different set of claims than do African Americans. The formation of the United States as a settler colonial society required the forced removal, confinement, assimilation and genocide of Native Americans (Nakano Glenn 2015).

Andrea Smith (2012) argues that there are three pillars of White supremacy: (1) anti-Black racism, (2) genocide, and (3) orientalism (Table 4-1). Anti-Black racism defines people as property, thereby justifying slavery and current forms of exploitation, and is rooted in a logic of capitalism—that is, designed to extract profit. Genocide is rooted in colonialism. This is the idea that Native people are disappearing and must disappear, and that therefore non-Native people have a right to everything that once belonged to Native people. Orientalism is rooted in the idea that certain nations or peoples pose a permanent threat to Western civilization and is thereby used to justify war.

TABLE 4-1 Pillars of White Supremacy

	Anti-Black Racism	Genocide	Orientalism
Justifies	Capitalism, slavery	Colonialism	War

	Anti-Black Racism	Genocide	Orientalism
Position	People can be property	Native people are disappearing and must disappear	Certain nations or peoples pose a permanent threat to Western civilization

Source: Based on A. Smith 2012.

Although the United States is no longer engaged in the mass murder and expulsion of Native Americans, many indigenous scholars contend that the logics of genocide and settler colonialism endure (A. Smith 2012). Native Americans continue to have a unique legal position in the United States: they are citizens both of the United States and of the tribes to which they belong. Scholars such as Andrea Smith (2012) contend that capitalist ideas of property ownership and White supremacist ideas of indigenous inferiority work together to justify the expropriation (seizure) of indigenous lands. From this perspective, simply returning lands to Native Americans would not solve the problem of indigenous expropriation. The more fundamental problem is the nation-state itself and the idea that people can control territory and keep other human beings out of it.

Once we recognize that the United States is a nation rooted in White supremacy, it becomes clear that the state will never grant native peoples self-determination. For some indigenous scholars, this recognition means that the struggle against racism requires a challenge to the very existence of the United States as a legitimate state (A. Smith 2012).

Students graduating from Haskell Indian Nations University, in Lawrence, Kansas.

It is clear how the settler colonial framework can be applied to Native Americans. European settlers arrived in the land that today is called the United States of America with the goal of acquiring these lands and extracting resources. To do this, they engaged in several strategies to expropriate the indigenous occupants: genocide, forced removal, confinement of Native Americans in reservations, and assimilation. Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2015) argues that the settler colonialism framework is useful for understanding the experiences of other racialized minorities because of the similarities between these groups. For example, Anglo settlers dispossessed Mexicans from their land in the Southwest, Mexicans have been forcibly expelled from the United States on several occasions, Mexicans have been forced to assimilate, and Mexicans have face violence and lynching at the hands of White settlers. Similarly, Chinese people in the United States have experienced segregation, mob violence, and expulsion. For these reasons, Nakano Glenn (2015) argues that a settler colonial framework is an important tool for analyzing racial oppression in the Americas in the past as well as the present.

Using these perspectives, we can see how frameworks shape research questions and answers. From the perspective of settler colonialism, one might argue that the United States is an illegitimate state founded on genocide and must be dismantled. From a systemic racism perspective, one can argue that the United States is founded on a history of racism and that the Constitution must be rewritten. From a racial formation perspective, the United States is headed in the right direction and through more struggles for justice and civil rights will complete the transition from racial dictatorship to racial democracy.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 4.4: White Supremacy and Settler Colonialism

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Islamophobia and Anti-Arab Racism

Islam is a religion. Does it make sense, then, to define **Islamophobia**—the systematic marginalization of Muslims—as racism? Because race and religion are distinct phenomena, religious discrimination and racial discrimination are not identical. Nevertheless, it is clear that the United States is a Christian-centric society and that people who are not Christians face various forms of marginalization. To what extent should we think of these forms of exclusion as racism?

Ramón Grosfoguel and Eric Mielants (2006) state that Islamophobia began as religious discrimination and has evolved into racial/ethnic discrimination. They point out that, at the same time that Spaniards set out to colonize the Americas, they expelled Jews and Arabs from the Spanish peninsula. During this time, religious beliefs were the primary motivation for the marginalization of Jews and Arabs. Grosfoguel and Mielants argue that in more recent times, however, Islamophobia and anti-Arab sentiment have primarily taken the form of cultural racism—a concept discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. They explain that the tropes used to describe Muslims and Arabs such as "uncivilized," "barbarian," "savage," "primitive," "underdeveloped," "authoritarian," and "terrorist" (4) are markers of cultural racism.

For Grosfoguel and Mielants (2006), Islamophobia is a form of racism. Steven Salaita (2006) argues, however, that it is important to draw a distinction between Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. Despite the American conflation of Arabs and Muslims, only one-fifth of the world's total Muslim population is Arab, and not all Arabs are Muslim (Grosfoguel and Mielants 2006). Salaita (2006) maintains that anti-Arab racism goes beyond dislike or distaste for Islam: it is used to justify U.S. military interventions in the Middle East.

VOICES

Jennifer Li

As an Asian-American, I'm Tired of Being Racially Gaslit By My Peers.

Recently, I saw a post about anti-Asian hate crimes in which a commenter questioned if there was "a single oppressive American system that targeted East Asian Americans." This Black commenter claimed that they would "rather be stereotyped for being good at math, than for liking watermelon and stealing," and to remember that "when we address Black issues, they trickle up to the rest." … I couldn't stop thinking about the two-year-old and six-year-old Burmese-Americans in Texas who were stabbed a Sam's Club for looking Chinese. …

In the comments of the post, I asked the commenter how trickle-up reform tackles how Asian-Americans are rebuffed for speaking about our experience. However, two more users proceeded to rebuff my comment; attacked me for the rampant anti-Blackness that occurs in the older Asian generations; informed me that Asians are "idle in the black struggle;" and decreed that I am of a lowly, ignorant, and performative character. All in all, it was an excellent example of racial gaslighting.

Technically speaking, gaslighting is a tactic that manipulates someone into second-guessing their reality and sanity.

In the case of racial gaslighting, victims are made to doubt the veracity and validity of their racist experiences. As an Asian-American woman, I've experienced quite a bit of this: I'm told not to complain when I experience microaggressions and outright racial harassment because "I could have it worse." After all, Asian-Americans are seen as a minority group that doesn't experience racism. But it's not that we don't experience racism; the racism we face takes a different form—and there's nothing Asian-Americans have been better at doing than swallowing down our frustrations and

downplaying our experience, for the sake of harmony and pleasantness. After all, we've had to do it from both sides of America's race debate: white America and BIPOC America. …

Asian-American history and literature are nonexistent in American classrooms unless to talk about how white people acted as white saviors to colonized Asians. We're ignored, until white Americans need to wield the good old Model Minority to keep BIPOC communities down by dangling the perception of our success in front of them, like a carrot.

At the same time, we're alienated from BIPOC communities because of our proximity to white privilege.

Some of us face constant suspicions of being terrorists. Some of us endure generational trauma that comes with being immigrant refugees, fleeing from countries that the U.S. razed and then abandoned. Some of us have been dismissed for centuries by the U.S. system as "a race of people whom nature has marked as inferior, and who are incapable of progress or intellectual development beyond a certain point, as their history as shown" …

And even though things are currently changing, we've been pretty nonexistent in politics, entertainment, and media. America is the land of freedom—freedom of speech and the pursuit of happiness. But when we speak on our experiences of racism, America tells us about ourselves: You're no better than white people. You had this coming. You don't know what it's like to experience racism.

An 89-year-old Asian grandmother certainly did experience racism when she was on fire on the street last year. An Asian-American woman also experienced racism when she was followed and told "no one's going to pay attention to you, 'cause you're dumb, and you're a stupid blue Asian-haired girl.'" And since the emergence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, there has been a vacuous whisper of coverage and media attention to rising anti-Asian hate crimes, which only perpetuates the narrative of the Asian-American experience being unimportant and ignorable. And I

am so sick of it. I am so sick of seeing our stories ignored over and over again, like we don't matter, like we can just be dismissed.

Source: Jennifer Li for the Boston Globe February 19, 2021 https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/asian-american-im-tired-being-213057150.html?guccounter=1.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 4.5: Islamophobia and Anti-Arab Racism

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Intersectional Theories of Race and Racism

In what ways do race, class, and gender oppression work together? Some race scholars argue that we need to develop a concrete understanding of how race and racism work before we can understand other forms of oppression. Feminist scholars, however, often contend that we must look at race and gender oppression simultaneously—a concept known as **intersectionality**.

Intersectionality is not a question of counting our identities to see how many marginalized identities we have. Intersectionality is not something that only applies to people of color or to women. It applies to us all, as intersectionality involves an analysis of how multiple systems of oppression shape all of our lives.

For example, White supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism are three interlocking systems of oppression. White supremacy is a system of racial stratification that places White people at the top of the hierarchy. Patriarchy is a system of gender oppression where men hold the power and are the central figures in the family, community, government, and larger society. Capitalism is a system of class exploitation that produces wealth and income inequality through a profit-based system that maximizes profit for capitalists (Valdez 2011).

TABLE 4-2 Intersectionality

Systems of Oppression		
White Supremacy	**Patriarchy**	**Capitalism**

Systems of Oppression		
White Supremacy	**Patriarchy**	**Capitalism**
A system of racial stratification that places White people at the top of the hierarchy	A system of gender oppression where men hold the power and are the central figures in the family, community, government, and larger society	A system of class exploitation that produces wealth and income inequality through a profit-based system that maximizes profit for capitalists

Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins argues that these three systems are interdependent, and that we cannot understand one system without looking at the others. Feminist theorist bell hooks describes these systems of oppression as the "White-supremacist capitalist patriarchy." Bell hooks (2000) explains that "interlocking systems of classism, racism, and sexism work to keep women exploited and oppressed."

Kimberlé Crenshaw was the first scholar to refer to the intersection of these systems of oppression as intersectionality. Building on notions of interlocking systems of oppression developed by Black feminists, Crenshaw published an article in 1991 that argued that an intersectional framework is necessary to understand the experiences of women of color who have survived domestic violence. Crenshaw (1991) explains how a group of Black and Latinx women in a battered women's shelter. Taken together, race, class, and gender elucidate how these women ended up in the shelter. The women faced abuse in part because of gender oppression, but their economically vulnerable situation and race also help us understand their situation. If they had the economic resources, they likely would have gone elsewhere—not to a shelter. If they were White, they wouldn't face racial discrimination in employment, meaning that they may have had more resources. If they were men, their chances of being battered would be much lower. Any proposed method of helping these women must pay attention to their gender, class-based, and racial

oppression. A narrow lens that focuses on just race, gender, or class would miss crucial aspects of these women's situations.

Patriarchy, White supremacy, and capitalism shape how the state and society respond to women. To understand why women of color are overrepresented in domestic violence shelters and on the welfare rolls, we need an understanding of how the White-supremacist capitalist patriarchy works. This understanding allows for a deeper analysis both of how people experience oppression and of how these systems of oppression operate.

Chapter 4.2 Video

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RESEARCH FOCUS

White Supremacy, Patriarchy, and Global Capitalism in Migration Studies

Sociologists Tanya Golash-Boza, Maria D. Duenas, and Chia Xiong (2019) use intersectionality to examine how White supremacy, patriarchy, and global capitalism simultaneously shape the migratory and incorporation experiences of migrants and their children. They argue that bell hooks's (2000) concept of a White supremacist capitalist patriarchy, which she defines as "interlocking systems of classism, racism, and sexism work to keep women exploited and oppressed" (109), applies to migrants and their children. They examine three cases: Betty, a deportee from Guatemala; Ana, a U.S. born child of a Dominican father and Dominican American mother; and Mao, a Hmong refugee.

Let's focus on Ana's specific case. She is a college student from Orlando, Florida. White supremacy, patriarchy, and global capitalism all shaped Ana's lived experiences. White supremacy shaped Ana's understanding of race. Although she looks and is perceived as Black, she does not self-identify as Black. Instead, she prefers to identify as Hispanic or Dominican. This self-identification is structured by the system of White supremacy due to the historical denial of African descendants in the Dominican Republic. Patriarchy shaped Ana's relationship with her father and exposure to her Dominican culture because her father lived in the Dominican Republic to financially support the family. Her mother did not know much about Dominican culture. Consequently, Ana had few opportunities to learn about Dominican culture and was not able to learn Spanish. Thus, it is often difficult for her to communicate with Spanish-dominant Latinx people. Patriarchy structured Ana's family because Ana's mother was the one responsible for caretaking in the family while her father was responsible for financially providing. Patriarchy conditions the roles and labor of mothers and fathers in

families. Global capitalism was part of the reason why Ana's family migrated to the United States. In 1961–1968, the United States intervened to control the Dominican Republic's sugar industry and prevent the rise of communism. Subsequently, the United States experienced the second-highest migration from the Dominican Republic, second to Mexico (Golash-Boza 2012), which included Ana's grandmother, who arrived in 1965.

Using intersectionality to understand Ana's experiences, we see that White supremacy, patriarchy, and global capitalism have intergenerational consequences on the familial, cultural, and community resources that Ana has access to. These familial, cultural, and community resources are important tools that can be used to challenge different forms of oppression that Ana may experience, such as anti-Black racism or other forms of discrimination.

For Discussion:

1. How is bell hooks's concept of a White supremacist capitalist patriarchy related to intersectionality?
2. Why is intersectionality useful for studying migrants and their descendants?

Source: Golash-Boza, Duenas, and Xiong 2019.

Intersectionality is part of a **critical race theory** tradition. Critical race theory differs from other theories of race insofar as these theories center the voices of people of color, focus on the eradication (and not just the analysis) of racist oppression, and require reflexive thinking. From a critical race perspective, the only good reason to study race is to work toward the elimination of racial oppression. Taking this task on requires reflexivity about one's own positionality as well as an intentional effort to center the voices and experiences of people of color. As you develop your

own ideas about what racism is and how it works, think about the extent to which a critical race theory framework is useful for you.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 4.6: Intersectional Theories of Race and Racism

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Conclusion and Discussion

Theories of systemic, structural, and institutional racism provide us with different frameworks to understand the deep-seated nature of racial inequality in the United States. These analyses place the emphasis on racism and are exemplified by Feagin and Elias (2012), who argue that only through an understanding of racial oppression can we grasp the true nature of racial meanings. In contrast, racial formation theory focuses on how race is constructed, and it uses these analyses to understand racism (Omi and Winant 1994). Who is right?

There is no right answer to this question. Instead, it depends on the kind of question you are asking. An understanding of why African American and Latinx people are faring worse economically than White people in the aftermath of the Great Recession would likely benefit from an analysis based on systemic or structural racism (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor 2011). A consideration of why Indonesian women use whitening creams and yet insist they have no desire to be Caucasian might get a more nuanced treatment when approached from a racial formations perspective (Saraswati 2010). These two studies are both grounded in the field of racial and ethnic studies, but they have different research questions and goals and thus draw from different frameworks.

The frameworks set forth by indigenous and feminist scholars can also be more or less useful, depending on the kinds of questions you decide to ask. A consideration of Mayan migration to Houston would likely benefit from Andrea Smith's (2012) indigenous-settler framework, and an analysis of violence among youth gangs in Oakland, California, would likely be enriched by an intersectional perspective that focuses on race, class, gender, and sexuality. No theory can be expected to shed light on every aspect of our society. Moreover, sociologists and other thinkers

continue to develop ways for us to understand inequality. Readers of these texts can decide for themselves which frameworks are most useful for understanding the questions that are important to them. What about you? What frameworks do you find most compelling, and why?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 4.7: Conclusion and Discussion

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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

4.1 How is individual racism linked to institutional inequality?

- Prejudice, discrimination, and institutional racism are interconnected and thus should not be studied in isolation.

Review

» How do prejudice and discrimination differ, and what is the larger context in which they occur?

» How widespread is individual racism?

» How does institutional racism persist?

» What are some examples of racial microaggressions?

Critical Thinking

» How does individual racism persist?

4.2 What are the key similarities and differences between systemic racism and structural racism?

- Systemic racism and structural racism are two theoretical frameworks that aim to explain how racism is deeply rooted in society. While systemic racism focuses on accumulated acts of racism across history and throughout one's lifetime, structural racism points to interinstitutional interactions across time and space.

Review

» How do systemic racism and structural racism reproduce and justify racial disparities?

» How does structural racism explain wealth inequalities?

Critical Thinking

» How might the differences between systemic and structural racism shape a research agenda?

4.3 What is racial formation, and how does this concept inform our understanding of racial inequality?

- Racial formation is one of the most influential theories of race and racism in the United States. It focuses on racial meanings—how racial categories are "created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed," as Omi and Winant (1994) describe. This theory has received a significant amount of scholarly attention, mostly positive, but it has also been critiqued for not putting racism at the center of analysis.

Review

» What is an example of a racial project?

Critical Thinking

» What do Omi and Winant mean when they say the United States is transitioning from a racial dictatorship to a racial democracy?

4.4 What does the perspective of indigenous studies reveal about racism in the United States today?

- Another way to consider how racism works is to examine it from the perspective of indigenous studies. This leads us to

consider settler colonialism theory, which offers a broad critique of racism and capitalism.

Review

» What are the three pillars of White supremacy?

» Why is it important to understand genocide in relation to contemporary race relations?

Critical Thinking

» Are members of some racial groups more likely to experience specific kinds of racism (e.g., legitimized racism, cultural racism, structural racism)? Why or why not? Discuss at least two distinct racial groups and at least two forms of racism to make your case.

4.5 How is Islamophobia related to racism?

- Although Islamophobia refers to the systematic marginalization of Muslims—a religious group—some scholars argue that it is a form of racism.

Review

» On what basis do scholars argue that Islamophobia is a form of racism?

Critical Thinking

» Can you make a case that Islamophobia is a form of racism, drawing from one of the theories of racism outlined in this chapter?

4.6 In what ways do race, class, and gender oppression work together?

- Ideas of race, gender, class, and sexuality all shape how racism works, and intersectional scholars take these factors seriously as they build their frameworks.

Review

» What is an example of a scenario that intersectional theory helps us understand?

Critical Thinking

» Most of the scholars cited in the section on intersectionality are women of color. Why do you think these scholars have been at the head of these debates and discussions?

» Think of an issue related to racial inequality, and use one of the frameworks discussed in this chapter to explain it. Justify your selection of this framework over others.

Talking about Race

Structural ideas of racism help us understand how racial inequality can be reproduced even in the absence of overtly racist acts. What racial disparities in your community could be explained by a structural theory? How can you use what you have learned in this chapter to explain such disparities? Some examples might include a lack of green spaces in non-White neighborhoods, a preponderance of minorities in lower-quality schools, or a concentration of non-White people in poorer areas of the city.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 4.8: Check Your Understanding

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LIST OF KEY TERMS

- critical race theory
- individual racism
- institutional racism
- intersectionality
- Islamophobia
- racial formation
- racialized social systems
- racial microaggressions
- racial project
- sociological theories of racism
- structural racism
- systemic racism

5

Racism in the Media

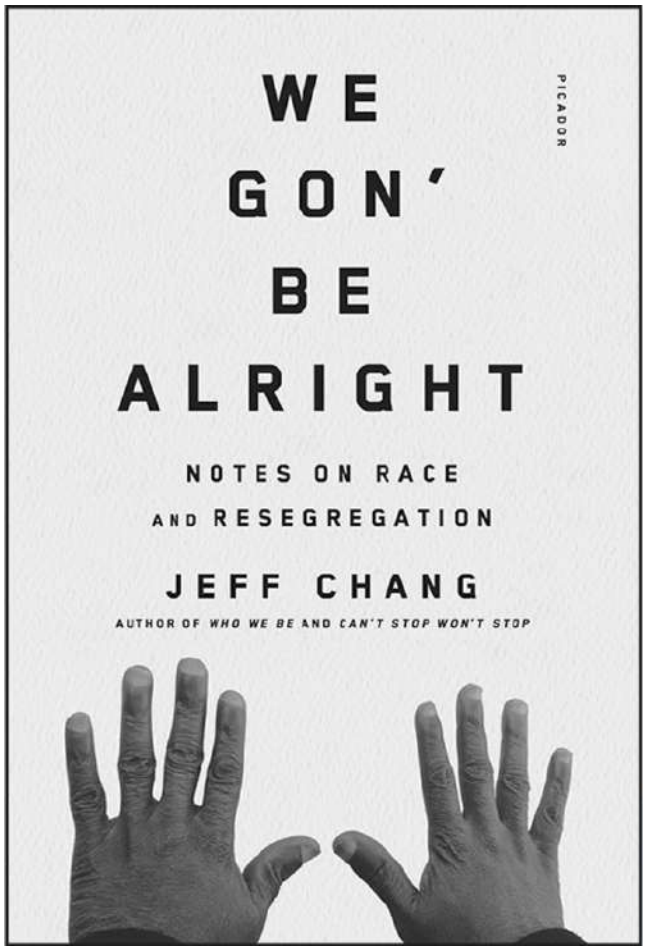
The Spread of Ideology

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

Mural from the Wide Open Walls art village project, Kubuneh, near Brikama, The Gambia. Plinthpics/Alamy Stock Photo

As You Read

- **5.1** How are racial stereotypes propagated in popular culture?
- **5.2** How have new media changed the way stereotypes are spread and countered?
- **5.3** How do media images serve to justify racial inequality?
- **5.4** How are media representations raced, classed, and gendered?



Comedian Chris Rock (2014) has described Hollywood as a "White industry". And as Jeff Chang explains in this excerpt from *We Gon' Be Alright: Notes on Race and Resegregration*, Hollywood storylines often come from a White perspective. Representations have changed with the release of hits such as *Black-ish* and *Fresh Off the Boat*, as he notes, yet people of color are broadly underrepresented as writers, directors, and producers.

In the first year of Obama's presidency, ABC's *Modern Family* reconstructed the suburban sitcom by augmenting the stock white nuclear family with an extended clan that featured a gay couple with an adopted Asian American child, and a patriarch with a gorgeous young Latina wife and child. In Hollywood elevator-pitch terms, it was *Married with Children* meets *I Love Lucy* and *The Birdcage*. But its surprise success made it possible for TV execs to gingerly step back toward shows with leads of color. For twenty

> years, Asians had not had a lead on television, but in 2016 *Fresh Off the Boat*, *Quantico*, and *Dr. Ken* were among ABC's top shows. ABC was also home to *Black-ish* and Shonda Rhimes's *Scandal* and *How to Get Away with Murder*. On Fox, *Empire* continued to crush the ratings. They were *the* big stories in a company town that loves to celebrate its successes.
>
> So maybe it seems a bit rude, a bit vibe-killing to note that, despite all of this, Hollywood remains overwhelmingly white. But it does. In February 2016, when Channing Dungey, an African American woman, was named president of ABC Entertainment, she became the first person of color to head a major network. In 2014, less than 6 percent of executive producers and 14 percent of writers were of color. These numbers had barely changed in a decade. Hollywood may indeed be run by the most liberal White people in the country—some of them have written and acted and produced with the deepest of empathy. But they can never be a substitute for people who can tell their own stories best. That was the lesson of *Black-ish*, *Fresh Off the Boat*, and *Empire*'s breakthroughs, a lesson that needed to be relearned every twenty years or so. Millions wanted to see shows written, directed, and acted by people of color telling stories about themselves. Duh.
>
> And yet the odds of a person of color breaking into the upper echelon of the culture, where the stories and songs and visions that we tell ourselves about ourselves—with all their values, meanings, and instructions for living—are gathered, made, and produced, and then marketed, sold, and pushed back to us, remain long indeed.
>
> *Source: Chang 2016*.

If you were to watch the films of the early twentieth century, you would find that people of color are portrayed almost exclusively in stereotypical

roles: Native Americans are represented as silent Indian chiefs, Arabs play the roles of desert sheikhs, Latinas appear as sexual objects, and African Americans play roles of maids and buffoons. Fast-forward to the twenty-first century, and we find more nuanced depictions. Nevertheless, there are still traces of these historical stereotypes in film, television, and even new media.

Moreover, these stereotypes are not harmless: they have real and enduring consequences. Representations of Black and Latinx people as poor and lawbreaking, for example, reinforce popular notions about Black and Latinx cultural deficiencies. The pervasiveness of these images leads many Americans to falsely believe that higher incarceration rates among Black and Latinx people are due to higher criminality (Feagin 2001; P. H. Collins 2004; Priest et al 2018). This stance ignores evidence to the contrary, as well as the racially discriminatory nature of the criminal justice system. However, it makes sense to people who constantly see images of Black and Latinx people shooting and robbing on television. Just as past stereotypes about Black laziness served to justify slavery, current representations of Black people as criminals work to justify the high rates of incarceration of African Americans. Representations of people of color on television are modern versions of the stereotypical images created to justify slavery, segregation, genocide, colonialism, and exclusion.

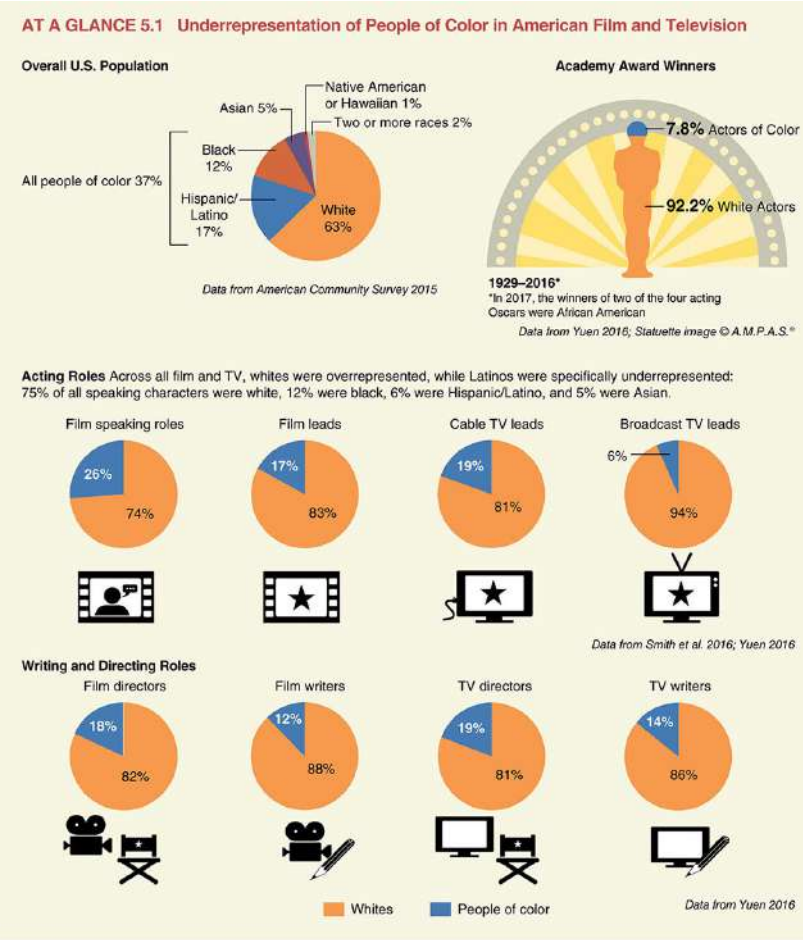
In this chapter, we will focus on racial ideologies propagated in the media. How do these ideologies play a role in normalizing and justifying racial inequality? Why do racial segregation and inequality remain prevalent despite laws against racial discrimination? An understanding of how the media reproduce racial stereotypes will help us answer these questions. More pointedly, this examination will show how media portrayals may partly explain why so little is being done about racial disparities in a nation that purportedly values equality and democracy.

Portrayals and Representations in Entertainment

In 2019, people in the United States watched, on average, 2.8 hours of television a day, making television viewing the most common leisure activity in the country (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020). Given that Americans spend so much time in front of screens, it is no wonder television shows and films have a great influence on how we see the world. Think, for example, of two popular shows: *Girls* and *Sex and the City*, both of which took place in the extraordinarily diverse New York City. According to the 2010 U.S. census, over one-third of the population of New York City is foreign-born, and the city's population is less than half White. In these two shows, set in the early twenty-first century, all of the main characters were White, and the tremendous racial and ethnic diversity of their city was largely unnoticeable, even when the characters were in public. Even in more recent shows such as Gossip Girl, the six main characters were all White, cisgender, and heterosexual. By presenting primarily White people in primarily White spaces, representations in shows such as these naturalize racial segregation. It thus seems perfectly natural to many White Americans that they themselves would live in primarily White neighborhoods and send their children to primarily White schools, even when they too live in multiracial urban areas (Orfield 2009). Racial segregation thus becomes completely normal and desirable.

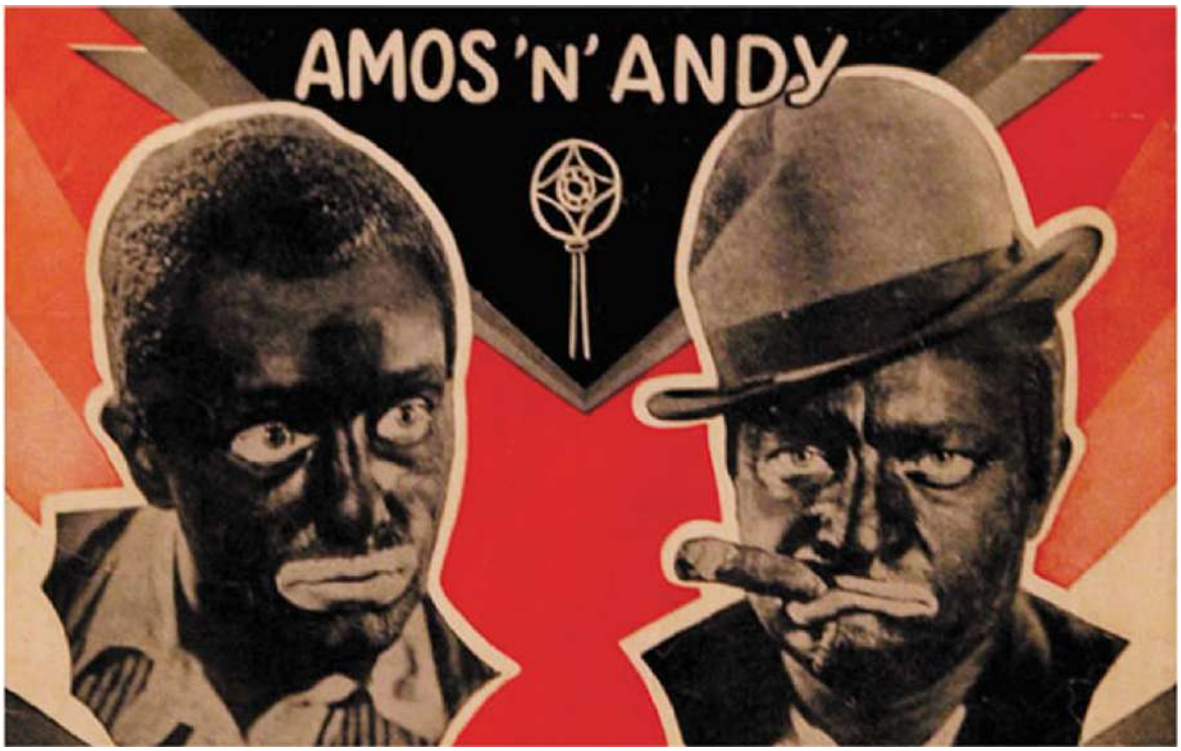
Because film and television shape how we see the world, it is important to consider how various groups are represented (At a Glance 5.1). Media scholars Stacy Smith, Marc Choueiti, and Katherine Pieper (2016) issued a telling report on diversity of representation in American entertainment. Their report is based on movies theatrically released in 2014 and prime-

time first-run scripted series, as well as digital offerings between September 1, 2014, and August 31, 2015, for a total of 414 stories. They found that only 28.3 percent of all speaking characters were people of color, yet people of color make up 37.9 percent of the U.S. population. As previous studies have found, shows and movies are mostly Black and White, as 71.7 percent of all characters were White, 12.2 percent were Black, 5.8 percent were Hispanic/Latinx, 5.1 percent were Asian, and 2.3 percent were Middle Eastern. Over half of all shows and movies featured no speaking Asian characters, and 22 percent featured no Black speaking characters. There was even more disparity at the level of directors, with only 13 percent of directors coming from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. Notably, only two directors were Black women.



A 2019 study examined the top 100 grossing films each year from 2007 to 2018. Only 17 of these 1,200 films had a lead or co-lead that was Latina.

Notably, 5 of these 17 lead roles went to Cameron Diaz—a White-passing Latina. Overall, only 3 percent of the top 100 films had a Latinx lead or co-lead (Smith et al. 2019). Latinx people stand out as the most underrepresented group in American entertainment, and all people of color are underrepresented as leading characters and in executive roles (Smith et al. 2016; Yuen 2016). Nancy Yuen (2016) explains that White people are 62.6 percent of the population, yet make up 74.1 percent of all speaking roles in films, 80.7 percent of all cable TV leads, 83.3 percent of all film leads, and 93.5 percent of all broadcast TV leads. White people also account for 81 percent of all directors and an astounding 96 percent of all television network and studio heads.



Prior to the civil rights era, shows such as *Amos 'n' Andy*, which poked fun at African Americans, were commonplace.

Portrayals of Black People

Prior to the civil rights era, portrayals of Black people on television and in popular culture were uniformly stereotypical. Shows such as *Amos 'n' Andy* featured African Americans who appeared almost exclusively as maids, cooks, con artists, or deadbeats. These representations served to legitimize the racial order of overt White dominance. The logic of the era was that African Americans were incapable of self-governance and thus were well served by the racial order of the day. White people were reassured that while Black people were often good servants and entertainers, they were not capable of assuming the responsibilities of full citizenship. The NAACP contended that *Amos 'n' Andy* exclusively represented Black people as lazy, stupid, loud, thieving, and dishonest and promoted racial prejudice against Black people; it eventually leveled a lawsuit against CBS because of these portrayals. The lawsuit was successful and resulted in *Amos 'n' Andy* being taken off the air in 1953 (Gray 1995; Hunt 2005).

In the 1980s, a completely different kind of show became popular. Instead of presenting Black people as deadbeats or servants, *The Cosby Show* had a central cast of successful Black characters. It reached the top of television viewers' rankings and remained there for most of its eight years on prime-time television (Hunt 2005). The show, which first aired in 1984, was about a middle-class African American family made up of Cliff Huxtable, a doctor; his wife, Clair, a lawyer; and their five children. The family lived in a spacious brownstone in New York City and was successful economically, socially, and educationally. The depictions could not be further from those of *Amos 'n' Andy*. However, even though *The Cosby Show* did not reinforce negative stereotypes of Black people, it still worked to reproduce what communications scholars Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis (1992) call **enlightened racism**: the idea that the United States is a land of opportunity and that African Americans could do better if they only tried harder.

Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis conducted fifty-two focus groups with White and Black Americans about *The Cosby Show* and found that White Americans were able to accept the Huxtable family as people like them.

There was a catch, however: although White Americans were happy to have the Huxtables in their living rooms each week, the show did not reduce stereotypes about other African Americans. Instead, the depiction of successful Black people on television reinforced enlightened racism. Moreover, White Americans began to see themselves as less racist because they liked the Huxtables and other African Americans who behaved similarly. White people attributed any negative feelings they might have had about other African Americans not to their Blackness, but to how they behaved. The fact that the Huxtables never experienced racism further reinforced the idea that racism is the direct result of how African Americans behave.

In the media today, we see another seemingly positive image of African Americans: the Black athlete. African Americans dominate U.S. sports, and Americans of all hues idolize Black athletes. The idolization of Black athletes might make it seem as if the media tend to portray these athletes in a positive manner. However, scholars who analyze the portrayal of Black athletes point out that these portrayals also reinforce stereotypes and that the media portray Black and White athletes quite differently (King and Springwood 2001). For example, when Black athletes transgress moral or legal boundaries, the media are quick to home in on the stories—especially those that reinforce stereotypes. One example Charles Fruehling Springwood and C. Richard King give is of Christian Peter, a White football player, and Lawrence Phillips, a Black football player, both of whom played at the University of Nebraska. When Peter was accused of assaulting a White woman, the incident received attention only in Lincoln, Nebraska. When Phillips, however, was charged with beating his White ex-girlfriend, it received intense national coverage, including a segment on *60 Minutes*. Fruehling and King also juxtapose athletes Kobe Bryant and Drew Henson. They argue that when Kobe Bryant, a Black basketball star, decided not to attend college full-time, the media commentary suggested that Bryant needed refinement, training, and discipline, and that this was a bad decision. In contrast, when Drew Henson, who is White, made a similar decision, the conversation in the

media did not revolve around his maturity or his possibilities for upward mobility.

Stereotypical representations in sports also extend to women. David Leonard (2014) explains how portrayals of White tennis player Candace Parker differ from those of Black players Venus and Serena Williams. He argues that Parker is portrayed as representing an ideal femininity, both nurturing and sexual. In contrast, the Williams sisters are often portrayed as muscular, aggressive, and masculine. Instead of focusing on their talent, media representations of both Parker and the Williams sisters often home in on their bodies—and they do so in racialized ways.

African American women are portrayed in stereotypical ways in the media more generally. A study by Melissa Harris-Perry (2011) revealed that stereotyped caricatures of Black women—as Mammies, Sapphires, and Jezebels—continue to be prominent. A **Mammy** is a stereotypical image of a Black maid, encapsulated by the "Aunt Jemima" icon and taking its name from the character "Mammy" in the book and film *Gone with the Wind*. **Sapphire** was one of the main characters on *Amos 'n' Andy* and is a caricature of an angry Black woman. **Jezebel** is a name with biblical origins that has come to signify an oversexed or hypersexual Black woman. Harris-Perry (2011) found that these three stereotypes about African American women have been prominent in political and popular culture since the Civil War and influence how Black women perceive themselves and are perceived by others.

(a) Hattie McDaniel as “Mammy” in the movie *Gone with the Wind* (1939). (b) The Mammy stereotype is encapsulated in the “Aunt Jemima” logo, portrayed here by Anna Robinson in the 1930s. (c) In 1989, Quaker changed the logo to a less offensive image.

Chapter 5.2 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Over the past few years, representations of African Americans on television have improved considerably. One example is Issa Rae’s HBO series, *Insecure*, which premiered in 2016 and is based on Rae’s web series hit, *Awkward Black Girl*. The comedy features a variety of protagonists, most of whom are African American, and Issa Rae stars as a version of herself. The show is set in Los Angeles, where Issa works at a youth-oriented nonprofit. The show revolves around Issa’s relationships, particularly with her best friend, Molly, a driven lawyer; and her

boyfriend, Lawrence, who is looking for a job. With several Black protagonists, *Insecure* is able to avoid stereotypical portrayals of Black people. Additionally, the show does not shy away from dealing with racism, especially in the workplace—showing a reality many African Americans face.

VOICES

Why *Black-ish* Is the Show We Need Right Now

Last night, *Black-ish* aired an episode titled “Hope” that exemplified why diversity is so important in entertainment. Within its short thirty minutes, a tough and divisive issue was handled with intelligence and depths of which hour-long shows typically seem incapable of achieving. I submit that this was all made possible by a creator and writers who can speak from personal experience and a cast that can deliver from the same place.

The sitcom *Black-ish* addresses serious issues related to race and racism.

The episode didn’t stop with a surface discussion of police brutality. Instead, it delved deeper and raised discussion around “the talk” with children about brutality and protests. The genius of the episode, however, was the counterpoints Dre and Rainbow took. While Rainbow took the more conservative, and hopeful position, Dre spoke for the black anger that burns deep inside of us that we have been forced to coexist with. They were personifications of so many

things: positivity and despair, old school and new school, compassion and passion.

This extended into their children, as Junior wanted to join the protests, Zoe was overcome with the frustration of it all, and the twins were just too young to even understand what was happening. Still, they were stuck in the middle between the need for self-preservation and fighting for the preservation of future generations. This is one of the most devastating aspects of blackness, often having to choose between your own health and prosperity and that of your children and those to come.

But even in all of the darkness, there was a tragic, brilliant beauty to it all. And having this displayed in such a public and truthful manner was restorative.

It was an unabashed and unbridled acknowledgment of the struggle that communicated our shared struggle nationwide. This is what good TV looks like. This is the power of diversity in entertainment. This is why representation is important. And I like to believe that, for non-minority viewers, their perception of the unrest across the nation has been shifted at least a little.

Source: Jackson 2017.

Portrayals of Latinx People

Latinx people are both underrepresented and misrepresented in American media (Monk-Turner, Heiserman, Johnson, Cotton, and Jackson 2010; Smith et al. 2016). In a study of prime-time television during March 2007, Monk-Turner and colleagues found that overall, Latinx people were the group most likely to be portrayed negatively on television (2010). For example, the researchers' analyses revealed that none of the Latinx characters were depicted as articulate, whereas 25 percent of Black and 30 percent of White characters were (see Figure 5-1). Half of all African American actors were depicted as intelligent, compared

with 43 percent of White people and 27 percent of Latinx people. Finally, the researchers found that only 2 percent of White actors were portrayed as immoral, compared with 18 percent of Latinx people, and 3 percent of White people were portrayed as despicable, compared with 18 percent of Latinx people.

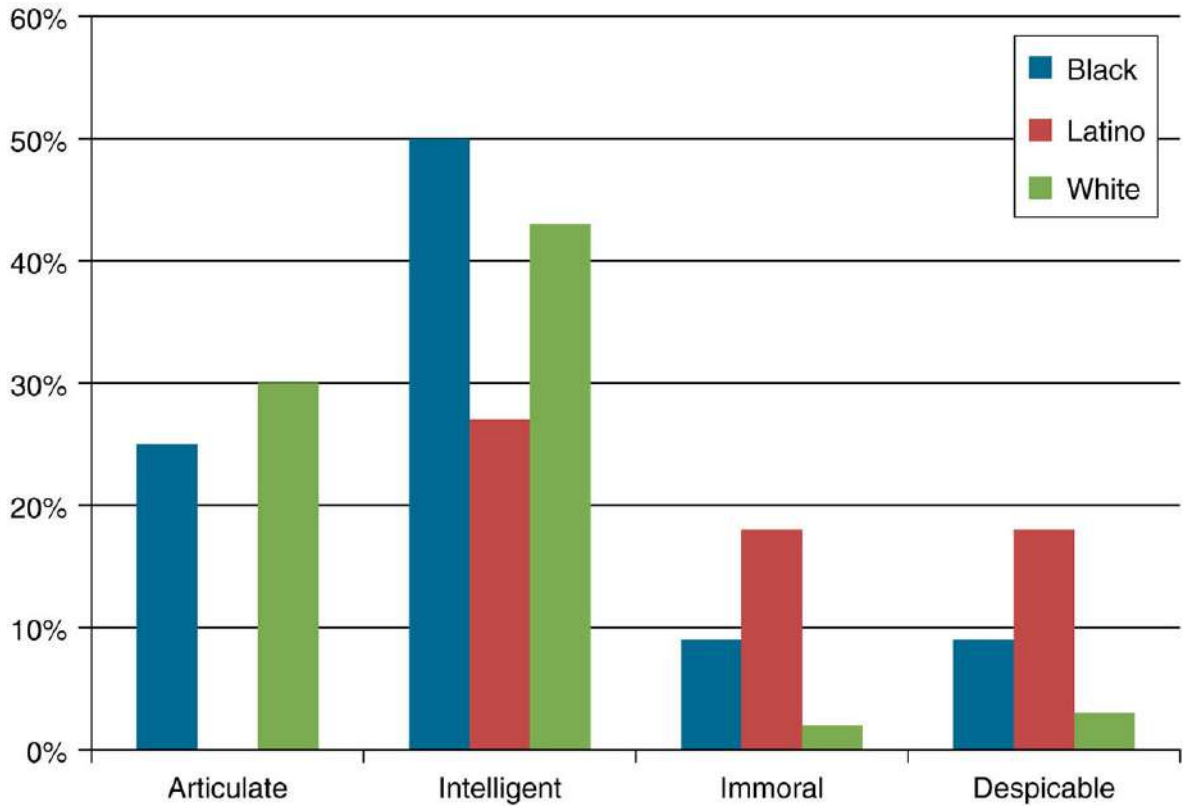


FIGURE 5-1 Representations of Black, Latinx, and White People on Television
Source: Monk and Turner (2010).

In 2013, Latinx people were notably absent from significant roles in the American media. There was not a single Latinx actor with a leading role in the top ten movies and scripted network TV shows. There were no Latinx people among the top ten television show creators, and Latinx people constituted just 1.1 percent of producers, 2 percent of writers, and 4.1 percent of directors. Finally, only one Latina ranked among the top 53 television, radio, and studio executives (Negrón-Muntaner 2014).

A study of the top 100 grossing films each year between 2007 and 2018 found that a quarter of all Latinx speaking characters were depicted as lawbreakers (Smith et al 2019). Latino men are often stereotyped into specific roles: gangbanger, bandit, drug trafficker, police officer, janitor, gardener, and the Latin lover. Latinas are most likely to be portrayed as either hot-blooded women anxious for sexual fulfillment or maids anxious to please (Rodríguez 1997). Prime-time American television shows starring Latinx actors are few and far between, although this has been changing over the past few years. The main problem with Latinx representation in entertainment continues to be underrepresentation. Given such a limited variety of representations, it is difficult to avoid stereotypes.

The show *Jane the Virgin*, which debuted in 2014, breaks from some of these representational patterns. It centers on a Latinx family, made up of three generations: twenty-three-year-old Jane; her thirty-nine-year-old mother, Xiomara; and her grandmother, Alba. Nearly all the main characters in the show are Latinx. Whereas Xiomara is cast as a sexy Latina, Alba performs the role of the sweet *abuelita* (grandma). Despite these (and other) tropes, the show is able to dig deeper into these roles and presents a complex view of a Latinx family. In a twist, the primary villains in the show are not Cuban cartels or the Mexican mafia, but eastern European mobsters. *Jane the Virgin* ran for five seasons, ending in 2019.

Jane the Virgin features a mostly Latinx cast and breaks from stereotypical portrayals.

Portrayals of Arabs and Arab Americans

Although nearly 3.7 million Americans trace their roots to an Arab country and nearly 82 percent of Arabs in the United States are citizens (Arab American Institute 2017), Arabs are overwhelmingly portrayed on American television as foreign. Arab women are usually seen veiled or as exotic figures, and Arab men as terrorists or billionaires. In very recent years, this portrayal has begun to change, and we now occasionally see Arab Americans on prime-time television, often as the targets of racial discrimination. Evelyn Alsultany (2008) points out that in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, some television shows took up the question of whether it was fair to discriminate against Arab or Muslim Americans in the name of national security. Alsultany contends that this representation leads to the conclusion that Americans have to choose between protecting the nation and discriminating against Arabs and Arab Americans (who are, according to the subtext, prone to being

dangerous). Although more nuanced than previous representations of Arab men, this representation ultimately reinforces the idea that Arabs are terrorists and thus that it is legitimate to discriminate against them in the name of national security.

A team led by Nancy Wang Yuen analyzed all 242 prime-time first-run scripted television shows airing between September 1, 2015 and August 31, 2015 and created a report titled "Terrorists and Tyrants: Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) Actors in Prime Time and Streaming Television." Their report concluded that MENA actors are largely absent from prime time: 92% of these shows had no MENA actors. When they do appear, they are largely tokens: 90% of shows which had MENA actors featured only one MENA actor. Moreover, nearly all MENA actors are portrayed as foreigners, terrorists, or tyrants: of those MENA actors who appeared on prime time, 67% were in crime or geopolitical dramas, 67% spoke with strong foreign accents, and fully 78% were trained terrorists or tyrants (Yuen et al 2018).

The trope of Muslims as terrorists continues to be prevalent in American television. In a 2012 article about the television series *Homeland* in *Salon*, Laila Al-Arian writes: "*Homeland* leaves little doubt that, regardless of the other red herring motivations of justice and psychological manipulation, it is being Muslim that makes someone dangerous." In addition to portraying most Arab or Muslim terrorists on the show as terrorists or terror suspects, *Homeland* also presents a distorted view of the Middle East. *Homeland* portrays Beirut as a backwards, crumbling city when, in reality, Beirut is a modern, cosmopolitan city full of cafes, nightclubs, and clothing stores. The portrayal of the city angered Lebanese officials to the point that they threatened a lawsuit (Al-Arian 2012). Homeland ran for eight seasons and ended in 2020.

Portrayals of Asians and Asian Americans

Darrell Hamamoto (1994) analyzed representations of Asians and Asian Americans on television between 1950 and 1990 and found that Asian men were often represented as foreign, sinister, unidimensional, effeminate characters. But whereas Asian men are often presented in U.S. media as asexual or effeminate, Asian women are often portrayed as hypersexual. Asian women are presented primarily in two ways: as the **Dragon Lady** or as the **Butterfly** (Rajgopal 2010). The Dragon Lady is a sinister, crafty, and destructive seductress. The Butterfly is a demure, devoted, submissive wife who is eager to please White people and men in general.

More recently, some gains have been made in the representation of Asian women on television. One example is Dr. Christina Yang, a central character in *Grey's Anatomy*. Yang is a beautiful and competent doctor. Her character has substantial depth and defies the "generic Asian" stereotype by making it clear she is both Korean American and from Beverly Hills—not Korea. However, as Rajgopal (2010) points out, Christina Yang's character does not have the feminine qualities of White characters in the show, such as Meredith Grey. She remains enigmatic and cold, showing hints of the Dragon Lady stereotype as well as the "inscrutable Oriental" stereotype. Another important example is *Fresh Off the Boat,* which premiered in 2015. Notably, it is the first prime-time American sitcom in two decades to focus on an Asian American family. Unlike previous shows featuring Asian Americans, *Fresh Off the Boat* offers a cast of characters who are dynamic, stylish, and engaging.

The 2016 release of the Netflix original series *The Iron Fist* led to heated debates about Asian representations on television. Finn Jones—a White actor known for his role in *Game of Thrones*—was cast as the show's central character, Danny Rand. In the show, which is based on a Marvel comic, Rand is a wealthy heir who returns to New York City fifteen years

after being presumed dead in a plane crash. Warrior monks had taken him, and he had become their best martial arts student, vowing to fight a transnational Asian crime organization upon his return. As is typical of comic book stories, Rand is a White savior figure. The critiques of this series focus on casting a White man instead of an Asian American as Danny Rand. In 2014, blogger Kevin Chow wrote an open letter to Marvel asking them to cast an Asian as Danny Rand because doing so would remove the White savior aspect from the story and replace cultural appropriation with cultural reconnection. The directors did consider this possibility, and Lewis Tan—who is biracial (Chinese and White)—was a top contender for the lead role. Nevertheless, they chose Jones and missed an opportunity to raise the visibility of Asian American actors (Lee 2017).

VOICES

Why We Hacked *Homeland*

In this excerpted blog post, three artists—Heba Amin, Caram Kapp, and Don Karl (a.k.a. Stone)—explain why they "hacked" an episode of Homeland *by painting graffiti with their own message. Their intervention was broadcast in Season 5, Episode 2.*

[*Homeland*] has garnered the reputation of being the most bigoted show on television for its inaccurate, undifferentiated and highly biased depiction of Arabs, Pakistanis, and Afghans, as well as its gross misrepresentations of the cities of Beirut, Islamabad, and the so-called Muslim world in general. [Over several seasons], *Homeland* has maintained the dichotomy of the photogenic, mainly white, mostly American protector versus the evil and backwards Muslim threat. *The Washington Post* reacts to the racist horror of the season four promotional poster by describing it as "white Red Riding Hood lost in a forest of faceless Muslim wolves." In this forest, Red Riding Hood is permitted to display many shades of grey—bribery, drone strikes, torture, and covert assassination—to achieve her targets. She points her weapon of choice at the monochrome bad guys, who do all the things that the good guys do but with nefarious intent.

It cannot be disputed that the show looks good and is well acted and produced, as its many awards prove. But you would think that a series dealing so intensively with contemporary topics including the war on terrorism, ISIS, and ideological clashes between the U.S. and the Middle East would not, for example, name a key terrorist character after the former real-life Pakistani ambassador to the United States. Granted, the show gets high praise from the American audience for its criticism of American government ethics, but not without dangerously feeding into the racism of the hysterical moment we find ourselves in today. Joseph Massad, Associate Professor of Modern Arab Politics and Intellectual History at

Columbia University, addresses this deep-[seated] racism of American media towards the Middle East: "*Homeland* hardly deviates from this formula [of racist programming], except to add that Arabs are so dangerous that even all-American White men can be corrupted by them and become equally dangerous to America."

At the beginning of June 2015, we received a phone call from a friend who has been active in the Graffiti and Street art scene in Germany for the past 30 years and has researched graffiti in the Middle East extensively. He had been contacted by *Homeland*'s set production company who were looking for "Arabian street artists" to lend graffiti authenticity to a film set of a Syrian refugee camp on the Lebanese/Syrian border for their new season. Given the series' reputation we were not easily convinced, until we considered what a moment of intervention could relay about our own and many others' political discontent with the series. It was our moment to make our point by subverting the message using the show itself.

Asked to help add authenticity to the TV series *Homeland*, artists spray-painted the graffiti message above in Arabic, which translates to “Homeland is racist.” The message appears in the background of a scene in Season 5.

In our initial meeting, we were given a set of images of pro-Assad graffiti—apparently natural in a Syrian refugee camp. Our instructions were: (1) the graffiti has to be apolitical, (2) you cannot copy the images because of copyright infringement, and (3) writing “Mohamed is the greatest, is okay of course.” We would arm ourselves with slogans, with proverbs allowing for critical interpretation, and, if the chance presented itself, blatant criticism directed at the show. And so, it came to be.

In September 2017, a group of researchers issued a report titled “Tokens on the Small Screen: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Prime Time and Streaming Television.” This report is based on analyses of 242 broadcast, cable, and digital platform television shows in the 2015-2016 season. They found that Asians were not well-represented: only 4% of regular characters on these shows were Asian; 64% of shows did not feature a single Asian regular character; and 68% of TV shows with Asian regular characters only featured one. Asians were also not shown as being in relationships: White characters were three times as likely to be in an intimate relationship as Asian characters. When Asians did appear, they were often cast in stereotypical roles such as “forever foreigner, yellow peril, model minority, emasculated men, exoticized women, [or] sidekicks to White characters” (Chin, Deo, DuCros, Lee, Milman and Yuen 2017: 2). They describe these stereotypes in detail, making it clear how even seemingly positive stereotypes such as model minority can be problematic as they reinforce biological ideas of race. For example, they write “On *Truth Be Told* (NBC), when asked how her mixed-race daughter Sadie is doing, AAPI character Tracy replies, "When she sleeps, her little half-Asian brain is putting it together” (Chin et al 2017: 6).

Fresh Off the Boat features characters who are dynamic, stylish, and engaging. It is the first prime-time American sitcom in two decades to focus on an Asian American family.

Portrayals of Native Americans

In the early years of the United States, when White settlers were endeavoring to take over Indian lands in the newly formed nation, Native Americans were most popularly depicted as savages. Over time, the "captivity narrative"—in which White women and children were captured by savage natives—became a staple in American fiction throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Alongside this depiction of Native Americans as primitives and savages, an alternative depiction emerged: that of the Native American wise man or medicine man. Depictions of Native American men thus tend to fall into either of the two categories of the savage or the wise man (Bird 1999; Kopacz and Lawton 2011a; White 2012).

In popular culture in the United States, Native American men are often stereotyped to serve White people. At one end of the spectrum is the eroticized, nearly naked Native American who gives White women sexual pleasure or who is the object of White women's illicit lust. At the other end of the spectrum is the wise Native American man, who is often a stoic loner and who gives his best spiritual advice to White heroes. In both cases, sexuality and family life among Native Americans is largely invisible (Bird 1999).

Representations of Native American women also tend toward a duality: as either a princess or a lustful savage. Pocahontas is the quintessential representation of a Native American woman: she is beautiful, erotic, noble, and fully dedicated to her White lover. At the other extreme is the squaw, who has sex indiscriminately with both White people and Indians (Kopacz and Lawton 2011a). Similar to depictions of Native American men, these depictions are from a White point of view. Native American male and female characters often have the primary purpose of serving White interests—by providing sexual satisfaction, as well as intimate knowledge of nature and other sacred things, and by helping convince other Native Americans of the importance of assimilation (Bird 1999).

In a survey of Native American stereotypes on television, Frederick White (2012) found that television producers almost exclusively show Native Americans as shamans, wise men, sidekicks, princesses, and matriarchs. Today, Native Americans are most commonly represented on television in brief appearances on popular sitcoms. In these appearances, Native Americans are usually presented as the stereotypical wise men who offer advice to White protagonists (Tahmahkera 2008). There are very few representations of Native Americans on television as recurring main characters. And although other groups have seen breakthroughs with the success of *Jane the Virgin*, *Fresh Off the Boat*, and *Empire*, the same has not been true for Native Americans, who are notably absent in prime-time television.

According to the 2019 Hollywood Diversity Report, 77% of all actors in films in 2017 were White, 9% were Black, 5% were Latinx, 3.4% were Asian, 5% were mixed-race, and 0.4% were Native American. There were only five Native American actors among the 1,281 actors in films in 2017. In television, Native Americans were even less represented, holding only 0.1% of roles. Out of 940 characters in 2016-2017 season, there were only two Native American characters. And, of the 776 in broadcast roles, there were no Native American men, and just one Native American woman (Hunt, Ramón, and Tran 2019).

RESEARCH FOCUS

Media scholar David Stamps (2019) analyzed the television shows *Fresh Off the Boat* and *Jane the Virgin* for the proportion of racial-ethnic characters, depiction of negative stereotypes, and accuracy of cultural representation. Stamps asks: (1) Are Asian characters the largest representation of racial-ethnic groups portrayed in *Fresh off the Boat*?; (2) Is Asian cultural representation present in the broadcast show *Fresh off the Boat*?; and (3) What, if any, negative stereotypes of Asians are represented in *Fresh off the Boat*? These same questions were asked for *Jane the Virgin,* but about Latinx people.

The content analysis of six episodes from each show reveals that even though both shows center an Asian and Latinx family respectively, White characters still hold the most roles. Only 36 percent of characters in the six randomly selected episodes of *Fresh Off the Boat* were Asian (54 percent were White). Similarly, slightly less than half of the characters in *Jane the Virgin* were Latinx (42 percent). Stamps also found that mainstream American cultural traditions were depicted much less often than Asian or Latinx cultural traditions in both TV shows. Asian cultural representations made up 67 percent of cultural representations on *Fresh off the Boat* and Latinx cultural representations made up 60 percent of cultural representations on *Jane the Virgin*. Cultural representation examples include the Lunar New Year and speaking Chinese for Asian culture, topics about immigration and speaking Spanish for Latinx culture, and celebrating President's Day for mainstream American culture. Lastly, Stamps found that both shows depict negative stereotypes of Asian and Latinx people respectively (see the accompanying table). These include the "model minority," the "tiger mom," the "nerdy Asian," the "sultry Latina vixen," the "snazzy entertainer," and the "inassimilable foreigner."

Stamps (2019, 9) concludes, “[B]oth *Fresh off the Boat* and *Jane the Virgin* do not adequately reflect a shift in equitable racial representation and both shows perpetuate negative stereotypes of Asians and Latinos. Moving forward, a holistic approach regarding storytelling, appropriate representation, and authentic inclusion in television programs may benefit underrepresented audiences and society as a whole.”

Asian and Latino/a Media Stereotypes and Stigmas

Racial Ethnic Group	Stereotypes and Stigmas
Asians; Asian Americans; Asian Pacific Islanders	Model Minority Nerdy and Socially Awkward Overly Scientific Inassimilable Foreigners Kung-Fu Masters and Cunning Villains Non-Sexual Lotus Blossom Dragon Lady Tiger Mom Working with Technology Absent in Family and Domestic Settings Portrayed as “hard work, no fun”

Racial Ethnic Group	Stereotypes and Stigmas
Latinos/as; Chicanos/as; Latin American	Inassimilable Foreigners Illegal Aliens ‘Snazzy Entertainer Blue-Collar, Low-Status Employer “Macho Men” Gangsters and Drug Cartel “Latin Lovers” Hypersexual Spitfire The Harlot The “Dark Lady” The Tacky and Overly Emotional Mess

Source: Stamps (2019).

GLOBAL VIEW

Racial Stereotypes in Peruvian Television

Until 2015, a Peruvian television station featured a popular show on prime time called *The Humor Special*. “Negro Mama (Black Sucker),” a central character on the show, was played by a White man—Jorge Benavides—wearing blackface and a prosthetic enlarged nose and lips. The character was from humble origins, and the show made fun of her lack of social and intellectual acumen. Each evening, Peruvians across the country would sit down and laugh at Negro Mama. Upon viewing this portrayal, African American scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr., responded: “I can’t believe it. That’s disgusting. … I have seen some racist things on television. … I have never seen anything as racist as Negro Mama.”

The Humor Special also featured “La Paisana Jacinta” (Jacinta the Peasant), another character played by Benavides. La Paisana Jacinta was a stereotypical representation of an Andean woman who had migrated to Lima in search of economic betterment. The show ridiculed her gullibility and lack of social skills. Peruvian activists such as Monica Carillo Zegarra, president of the Afro-Peruvian organization LUNDU, criticized *The Humor Special* and demanded it be taken off the air (La Republica 2010). Yet proponents of the show insisted that it had purely humoristic intent and should not be read as offensive. The show was finally taken off the air in 2015, not in response to criticism of its racist imagery but because it had run its course.

Jorge Benavides in drag and brownface, playing “La Paisana Jacinta” in Peru’s “Humor Special.”

SELF-ASSESSMENT 5.1: Portrayals and Representations in Entertainment

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

New Media Representations

In 2013, the amount of time Americans spent online surpassed television viewing for the first time—the average adult spent five hours per day online (eMarketer 2013). By 2016, Americans spent an average of ten hours and thirty-nine minutes each day using smartphones, tablets, television, radio, computers, or video games (Associated Press 2016). Many of the same stereotypes prevalent in television are also apparent in video games and social media.

Video Games

About 91 percent of children between the ages of two and seventeen regularly play video games (Reisinger 2011). In 2019, persons aged fifteen to twenty-four spent an average of one hour a day playing games or using a computer for leisure (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019). Instead of being passive viewers, video game players are actively engaged and thus potentially more susceptible to stereotypes. Anna Everett and S. Craig Watkins (2008) carried out a study in which they explored how youths' interactions with video games affected how they thought about race. The researchers argue that the interactive nature of the games enhances the potential for the games not only to perpetuate stereotypes but also to counter them. Additionally, as technology has improved and permitted video games to be more realistic, game creators have been able to produce what they perceive to be more real and authentic places in video games. This increased realism has led, for example, to the creation of urban spaces that are dominated by African American and Latinx young men.

Studies of video games have revealed consistent stereotyping—Latinx people are overrepresented in sports games, Asians are almost exclusively

portrayed in fighting games, and Arabs are typically portrayed as targets of violence (Saleem 2008; Burgess, Dill, Stermer, Burgess, and Brown 2011). A study of video games by Melinda Burgess and her colleagues (2011) revealed that Black characters were more likely to be portrayed as thugs, athletes, and gun-toting figures than White characters. Burgess and colleagues also found that Black women were largely absent from video games. Video game development is overwhelmingly White and male —73 percent of developers are White and most are male (Srauy 2019). In addition, in a study of the normative practices of game developers, Srauy (2019) found that they rely on popular racial stereotypes in an effort to produce games they think are relatable.

Social Media

While for the most part, only corporations have the means to produce widely distributed films, television shows, and video games, individuals can produce and consume social media. In the United States, it is easy to create a Twitter account or YouTube video. With user-generated content, anyone has the power to counter stereotypes, not just reinforce them. But how often does this happen? Are people using social media to counter stereotypes, or are they simply reproducing them?

RESEARCH FOCUS

Kimberlé Crenshaw on Black Women's Lives Matter

At the 2016 American Sociological Association meeting, Kimberlé Crenshaw spoke on a plenary panel entitled "Protesting Racism." Midway through her presentation, Crenshaw asked all audience members to stand. She then told the audience, which included hundreds of sociologists, that she was going to read a list of names. She instructed the audience to remain standing until they heard a name they did not recognize. She began to read the list:

> Mike Brown
>
> Eric Garner
>
> Tamir Rice
>
> Freddie Gray
>
> Alton Sterling
>
> Philando Castille

At that point, most people in the room were still standing, as the police killings of these six unarmed Black men had been widely discussed on social media. She continued:

> Mya Hall

At this point, the vast majority of the people in the room took a seat. Mya Hall is a transgender woman who was killed after accidentally driving into the National Security Agency headquarters in Baltimore in 2015. Crenshaw then read more names:

> Tanisha Anderson
>
> Natasha McKenna
>
> Aura Russer

Jessica Williams

Meagan Hockaday

By this point, nearly everyone in the audience was seated.

These unarmed Black women were all killed by police within days or weeks of the men on the list. Crenshaw pointed out that most people have not heard of the women's names because the issue of police brutality has been framed as an issue pertaining only to Black men. Nevertheless, police officers have killed Black women, girls, and femmes, and it is a tremendous oversight to ignore their deaths.

Crenshaw explained:

> *There were no mass demonstrations over the death of Natasha McKenna, even though her institutionalized killing at the hands of six officers, who swarmed, shackled, hooded, and tasered her four times, was filmed and released to the public, supposedly to affirm the claim that the officers operated in an entirely professional manner. Virtually no one knows the name of Tanisha Anderson, who was killed by the Cleveland police a little more than a week before the tragic death of Tamir Rice. There's been no sustained advocacy for Mya Hall, who in Baltimore was killed by the NSA just days before Freddie Gray.*

Even though the movement in response to police killings has mobilized under the slogan "Black Lives Matter," it has not encompassed the experiences of women.

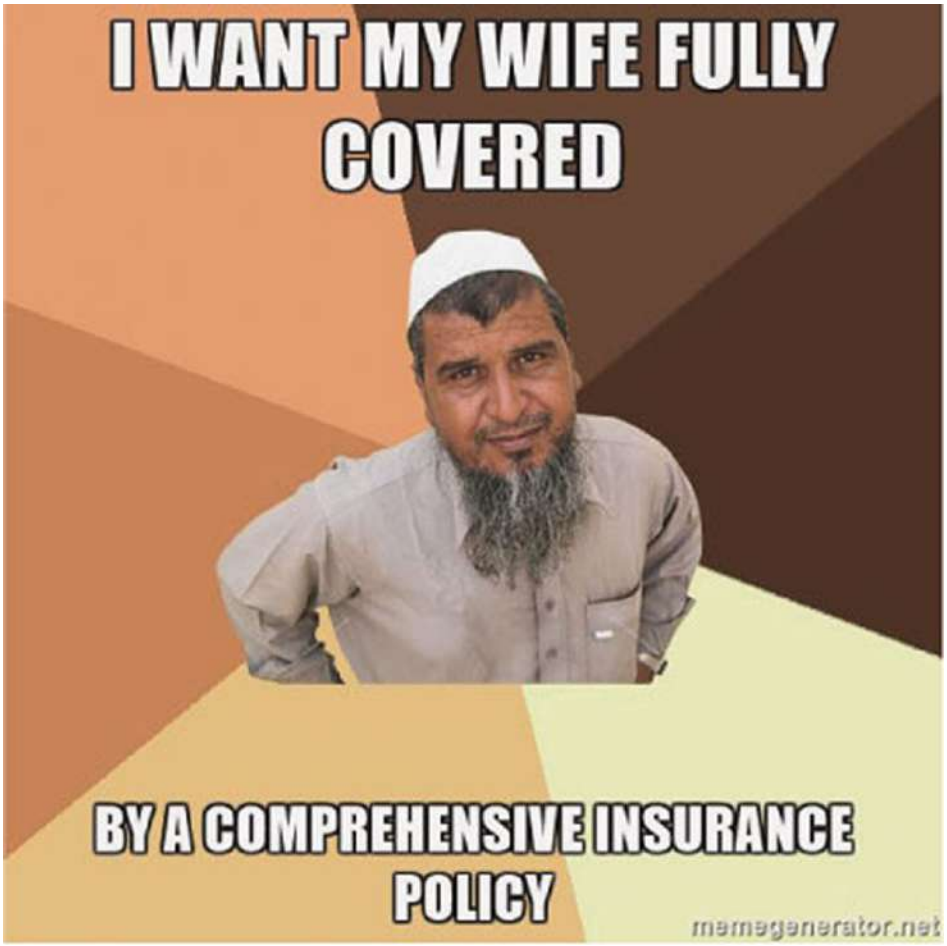
For Discussion

1. Why has the killing of Black women received much less attention than that of Black men?
2. Have you noticed any differences in the coverage of police killings of Black men versus women?

Source: Crenshaw 2016.

One phenomenon worthy of exploration is the racial **meme**, an idea, image, video, or phrase that spreads in a culture, particularly via social media. Memes can be an effective way to get messages across because they are easy to digest and can be widely shared across a variety of social media platforms, from Twitter to Facebook to Instagram to Snapchat. The meme shown in this section plays on stereotypes and may help people see their own biases.

Social media often afford some degree of anonymity to those who wish to propagate and validate racial stereotypes. Sociologist Jessie Daniels studies online hate speech and has found that people in the United States who have created websites with overt hate speech often go unpunished. In many cases, these website creators are protected by free speech laws and can post overtly racist messages on their own site without facing any legal trouble. Daniels (2008) also has found "cloaked" websites that seek to deceive Web users by appearing to have a neutral stance but actually give false information supporting a White supremacist outlook. One example of such a website is www.martinlutherking.org, which at first glance appears to be a tribute to civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but in fact aims to undermine him and other civil rights leaders.



Memes such as this make fun of stereotypes.

In contrast, some social media responses and campaigns can lead to positive changes, as we saw leading up to the 2017 Academy Awards. In 2015, the four acting categories included only White nominees. Activist April Reign started the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite in response, but in 2016, these four categories were again all White. This time, however, the hashtag went viral and caught the attention of Hollywood. Filmmaker Spike Lee, actress Jada Pinkett, and others announced they would be boycotting the ceremony. As a result of the outcry, in June 2016 the Academy extended 683 new membership invitations, 41 percent of which went to people of color. In 2017, the Oscar nominations and winners reflected much greater diversity— the winners of two of the four Oscars given to actors were African Americans. This represents a remarkable turn in the history of the Oscars. Additionally, Dev Patel was the first actor of Indian descent to be nominated in thirteen years, and

Mahershala Ali was the first Muslim actor to ever win an Oscar (*The Times of India* 2017). In 2019, three of the four Oscars in acting categories went to actors of color: Rami Malek won Best Actor; Regina King won Best Supporting Actress, and Mahershali Ali won Best Supporting Actor. In 2020, however, only one actor of color was nominated across all acting categories: Cynthia Erivo for best actress. She lost to Renée Zellweger and, in 2020, like in most years, no actors of color won awards for acting. That year did bring another surprise: *Parasite* won the Best Picture award, making it the first non-English language film to win an award. Set in South Korea, it also had an all-Asian cast.

In 2019, people of color made up 40 percent of the U.S. population, yet they won just 17 percent of Oscar nominees in the five years between 2011 and 2019 (see Figure 5-2). A report by the *Financial Times* visualizes these trends—showing how there have been increases in the numbers of nominees and lead actors over time, yet the percentages still lag behind the representation in the population. They also show that the 7,000 members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences continues to be primarily White and male. Although new women and people of color members are added each year, the Academy still has a long way to go before it is representative of the larger population—and of cinema attendees (see Figure 5-3).

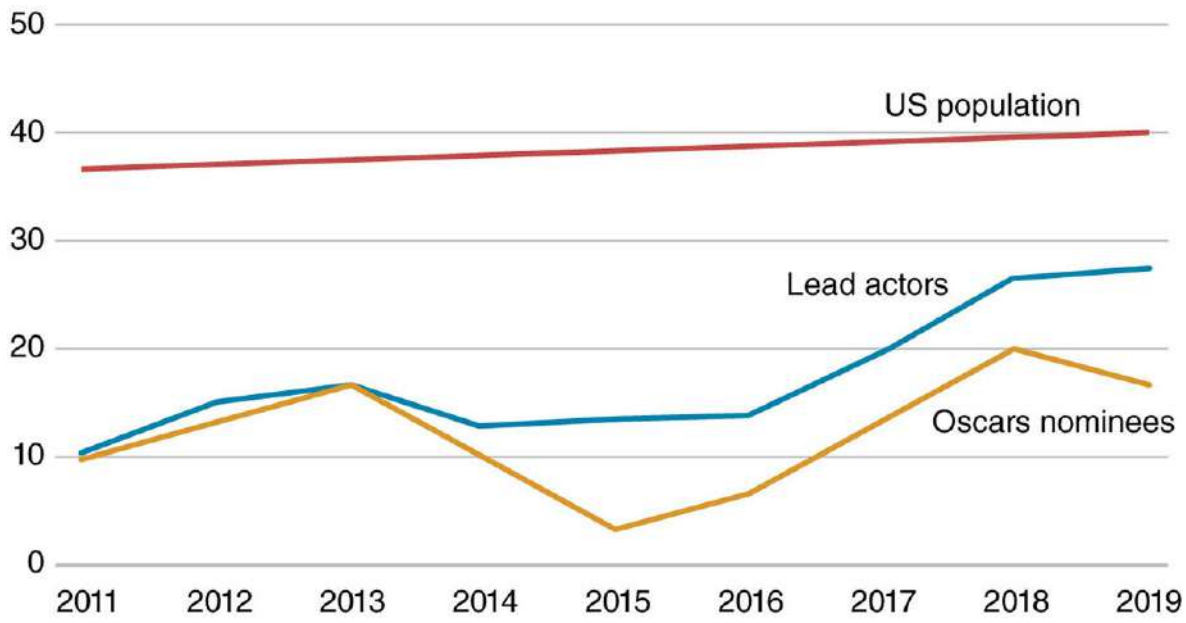


FIGURE 5-2 People of color as a percentage of U.S. population versus Oscar nominations

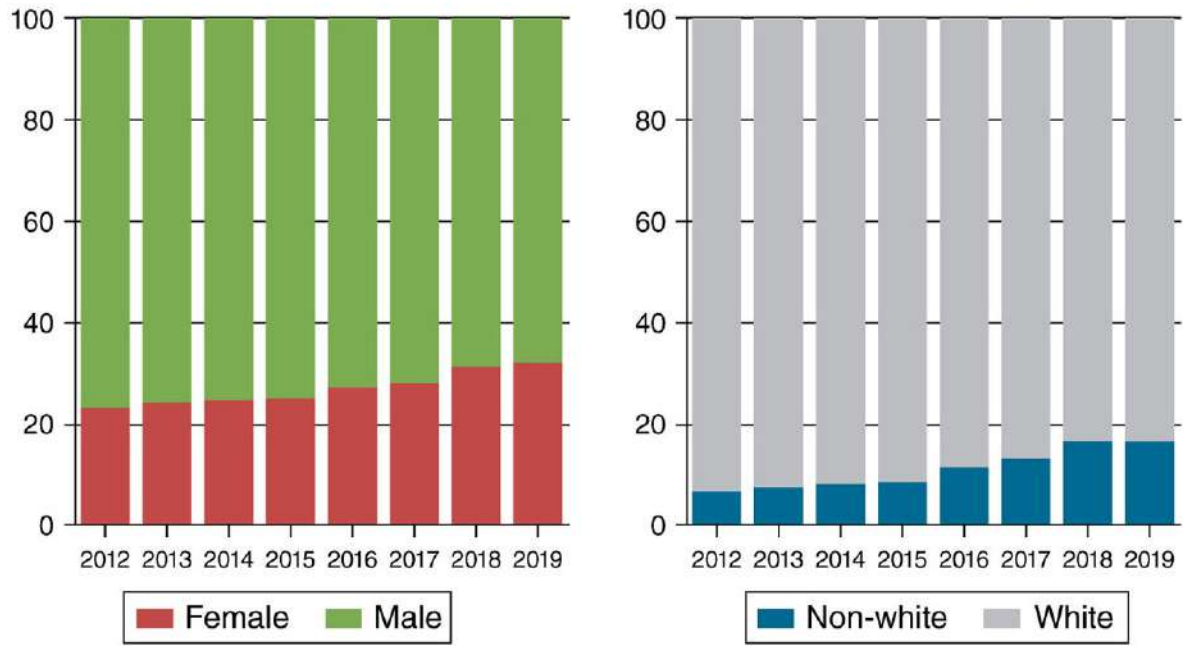


FIGURE 5-3 Increase in nonwhite-male lead actors over time. Source: *Financial Times*

As another positive example of the power of social media, a study by Maria Kopacz and Bessie Lee Lawton (2011b) found that YouTube videos have the potential to counteract stereotypes. The researchers assessed audience reactions to user-generated videos featuring Native Americans. Although viewers preferred videos that adhered to stereotypical depictions, they also had a positive response to videos that countered stereotypes and offered accurate depictions of Native American tribal diversity and activism. This study suggests that social media can work in positive ways to counter stereotypes. Resistance to and reproduction of racial stereotypes in new media is an emerging area of sociological inquiry, and future studies will further demonstrate how racial stereotypes are reproduced and contested in this realm.

VOICES

#CiteBlackWomen

Christen Smith started the #CiteBlackWomen hashtag to push people to think critically about who produces and is acknowledged for their knowledge production. With a group of other Black feminist scholars, they came up with these guiding principles:

1. Read Black women's Work;
2. Integrate Black women into the CORE of your syllabus;
3. Acknowledge Black women's intellectual production;
4. Make space for Black women to speak; and
5. Give Black women the space and time to breathe.

Source: https://www.citeblackwomencollective.org/our-story.html; https://www.citeblackwomencollective.org/our-praxis.html

SELF-ASSESSMENT 5.2: New Media Representations

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Media Images and Racial Inequality

Pop culture representations of people of color have evolved over time, yet continue to propagate old racial ideologies. While the seventeenth-century representation of Black men as lazy served to justify slavery, the current representation of Black men as thugs serves to justify the astonishingly high rates of incarceration of Black men today. And while the eighteenth-century representation of the Black woman as sexually depraved served to justify the common practice of raping Black women, the current representation of the "ho" in films and other media serves to justify cuts in social services to primarily Black inner cities by deeming poor Black women unworthy of such aid. Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (2004) argues that such justifications rely heavily on mass media representations of African Americans. She defines and describes a **new racism**, which reflects "the juxtaposition of old and new—in some cases, a continuation of long-standing practices of racial rule and, in other cases, the development of something original. The new racism reflects sedimented or past-in-present racial formations from prior historical periods" (55).

Modern-day representations of African Americans as thugs and whores are some examples of what Patricia Hill Collins calls **controlling images** (2004, 165), or raced, classed, and gendered media depictions of what African Americans are and are not. Throughout U.S. history, Black people have been represented as grotesque, physically resistant, and hypersexual. These representations create a fascination with Blackness, but they also define what White people are not. In this way, every representation of non-White people also defines Whiteness. If Black people are represented as embodying physical strength, then White people can see themselves as embodying intelligence—brawn versus brain. The same could be said of stereotypes of other groups: for example,

representations of Latinx people as gangbangers and gardeners send the message that White people are not gangbangers or gardeners. These stereotypical representations not only shape how people in the United States view one another but also work to justify rampant inequalities.

Chapter 5.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Representations of Latino men as drug kingpins, gangbangers, and petty criminals serve to justify the disproportionate rates of imprisonment for Latino men. These sorts of media representations reinforce the idea that Latino men are prone to criminality. The representation of Latinas as possessing uncontrolled sexuality serves to justify cuts in welfare and restrictions on immigration. And the representation of Latinas as maids reinforces the idea that Latinas are destined for low-wage occupations. With the exception of the criminal, the majority of the representations of Latinx people portray these individuals as being in service to White people or to the very system that exploits them. The Latin lover's primary role is to sexually please White women. The hot-blooded Latina fulfills the sexual desires of her lovers and the fantasies of others. The maid and the gardener keep the well-to-do neighborhoods looking nice. And the law enforcement officials keep the streets safe for everyone.

Portrayals of Arabs and Muslims propagate Islamophobia, promote Orientalist stereotypes, and work to justify foreign interventions. Hollywood has played an important role in portraying the Arab world as an exotic place that requires White Westerners to civilize its people and drag them into the twenty-first century. Shoba Sharad Rajgopal (2010) argues that representations of Arab women as veiled, traditional, and oppressed work to reinforce the stereotype that Western culture is "dynamic, progressive, and egalitarian," whereas Arab cultures are "backward, barbaric, and patriarchal" (145). She further contends that

these stereotypes reinforce the idea that Americans need to go to Iraq and Afghanistan to rescue women from themselves and, in particular, from their brutal and oppressive Arab husbands.

Insofar as media depictions shape our perceptions and portray White characters as having more depth and redeeming qualities, they work to justify the fact that White people tend to do better in American society on nearly any social measure. In a similar fashion, the depiction of Americans as saviors of the world helps to shape our perception of the United States as the beacon of democracy, even as the U.S. military wreaks havoc on Iraq and Afghanistan.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 5.3: Media Images and Racial Inequality

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Raced, Classed, and Gendered Media Images

As we have seen increasing numbers of people of color in popular culture, we have also become able to find a variety of representations across class lines. African Americans, for example, are no longer portrayed only as mammies or con artists. Instead, many are doctors and lawyers. Portrayals of people of color on television are raced, gendered, and classed—meaning that the representations vary by race, class, and gender, and that they influence how we think about various racial groups in this country. Patricia Hill Collins's (2004) concept of "controlling images" argues that the media produces class- and gender-specific depictions of people of African descent in popular culture. She further contends that "mass media has generated class-specific images of Black women that help justify and shape the new racism of desegregated, color-blind America." Collins's analysis of the representations of Black men and women in popular culture is useful, and I describe it in detail later in this chapter. In addition, Collins's idea of controlling images can be extended to other groups, including Latinx, Native American, Asian, and Arab characters.

Collins maintains that the vast majority of representations of Black people on television fall into the raced and classed categories presented in Table 5-1. Collins argues that these images influence how Black people treat each other and how others treat them. However, this does not mean that these images *determine* how Black people are treated. Instead, their pervasive nature means that they affect all people in our society. Faced with these images, we can: (1) internalize them and accept them as reality, (2) resist them and develop our own ideas about Black masculinity and

femininity, or (3) ignore them. Any of these reactions requires some action on our part and will affect how we think of ourselves and others.

TABLE 5-1 Raced and Classed Categories of Black Representations on Television

	Working Class	Middle Class
WOMEN	BITCH: Aggressive, loud, rude, and pushy BAD BITCH: Materialistic, sexualized; iconized in hip-hop culture; modern version of the Jezebel BAD BLACK MOTHER (BBM): Mother who neglects her children; characterized by bad values; welfare queen FEMALE ATHLETE: Feminized; focuses on the family; lesbianism erased	MODERN MAMMY: Loyal female servant; focuses on work and subservience to White male boss BLACK LADY: Designed to counter images of Black women's promiscuity; focuses on the home EDUCATED BLACK BITCH: Has money, power, and job; is beautiful; success depends on her being tamed by men
MEN	ATHLETE: Physically strong; harsh temper; needs to be controlled by coaches THUG OR GANGSTA: Inherently physical and, unlike the athlete, his physicality is neither admired nor easily exploited for White gain BLACK PIMP: Involved in illegal activity; hustler; uses women for economic gain; refuses to work; promiscuous BLACK RAPIST: Hypersexual, desirous of White women	SIDEKICK: Black buddy in service to White people; origins lie in Uncle Tom; loyal to White people; asexual, nonviolent, safe, nonthreatening SISSY: Effeminate and derogated Black masculinity; gay characteristics, a queen; reinforces heterosexuality of others

Source: Based on P. H. Collins 2004.

Collins primarily restricted her analyses to African Americans. The idea of controlling images can be applied to other groups, however, as it is evident that stereotypical representations vary by gender. Table 5-2 lists some examples of prominent gendered stereotypes of Arab, Native American, Latinx, and Asian characters. As with African Americans, these controlling images account for the vast majority of representations of these groups. Moreover, each of these depictions also defines what White people are not. White men are not terrorists or savages; they are peaceful and civilized. White women are not exotic or hot-blooded; they are reserved and ethical.

TABLE 5-2 Prominent Gendered Stereotypes by Racial/Ethnic Group

	Men	Women
ARABS	Terrorist	Veiled victim
	Immoral billionaire	Exotic seductress
	Haggler	Maiden
NATIVE AMERICANS	Savage	Squaw
	Sidekick	Princess
	Wise elder	Matriarch
	Doomed warrior	
LATINXS	Latin lover	Hot-blooded Latina
	Greaser/bandito	Maid
	Gangbanger	*Abuela* (grandma)
	Gardener	Mexican spitfire
	Buffoon	
ASIANS	Buddy	Butterfly
	Threatening foreigner	Dragon Lady
	Martial artist	

	Men	Women
	Corrupt businessman	

Source: Based on Rajgopal (2010); Kopacz and Lawton (2011a, 2011b); Rodríguez (1997).

Each of these representations is gendered. Arab women are rarely portrayed as terrorists, and men are almost always the perpetrators, not the victims, of gendered violence (Rajgopal 2010). Native American men are usually portrayed either as savages (cruel and primitive men who brutalize White people), as wise elders who use their knowledge to help White people, or as warriors who are romanticized but know that their tribe will ultimately meet its doom. In contrast, Native American women are usually portrayed as either princesses who fall in love with a White hero or as promiscuous squaws (Kopacz and Lawton 2011a). When Latino men on television are not involved in urban violence as either criminals or police officers, they are most likely to be found in unskilled labor occupations such as janitor or gardener. This portrayal of Latinx people as subservient is complemented by the portrayal of the Latin lover, who, despite his success in meeting the sexual desires of the Anglo woman, ends up being the "Latin loser" when his lover is in turn conquered by an Anglo man (Rodríguez 1997). Latinas, in contrast, tend to be portrayed as hot-blooded women, maids, or *abuelas* (grandmothers) who are out of touch with modern life (Berg 1997). Asian women tend to be portrayed either as Dragon Ladies or as Butterflies, both of which highlight their sexuality. In contrast, Asian men are usually desexualized and emasculated. These gendered stereotypes reinforce prevalent stereotypes about people of color in the United States and also work to define White people as morally superior.

VOICES

From “What’s Wrong with Cultural Appropriation? These 9 Answers Reveal Its Harm”

by Maisha Z. Johnson

…

What Cultural Appropriation Is (And Isn’t)

In short: Cultural appropriation is when somebody adopts aspects of a culture that’s not their own. But that’s only the most basic definition. A deeper understanding of cultural appropriation also refers to a particular power dynamic in which members of a dominant culture take elements from a culture of people who have been systematically oppressed by that dominant group. That’s why cultural appropriation is not the same as cultural exchange, when people share mutually with each other—because cultural exchange lacks that systemic power dynamic.

…

1. It Trivializes Violent Historical Oppression

To you, it can feel like a big deal to have to give up something you’ve borrowed from another culture and incorporated into your life, especially if it’s meaningful to you in some way. For example, owners and fans of the NFL team the Washington Redsk*ns have largely come to the defense of the name, pulling out every reason including “honoring Indians,” “keeping to tradition,” and “you’re being too sensitive,” in reaction to Indigenous activists calling for the end of Indian mascots.

The fans and the NFL are emotionally and financially invested in the name and don’t want to take extra time and money to change it. And that makes sense. But consider this: When violence

systematically targets a group of people through genocide, slavery, or colonization, the resulting trauma lasts through generations. So here's what's at stake for the Native people: The term "redsk*n" comes from the time when the colonial and state governments and companies paid white people to kill Native Americans and used their scalps or even genitalia (to prove their sex), aka "red skins," as proof of their "Indian kill." Given that history, is it a surprise that so many Native people are angry about football fans who think they're "honoring" Native people with this mascot and their excuses? We should be ashamed of this time in our history—and we should be working to heal the damage from it. But instead, the NFL (and other sports teams) insist on celebrating the genocide of a people for fun and profit.

…

3. It Makes Things "Cool" for White People—But "Too Ethnic" for People of Color

The U.S. is a white-dominated society, and for proof of that, search no further than the way immigrants, Indigenous people, and people of color are criticized for the things that distinguish us from white Americans. For example, standards of professionalism hold back all kinds of people who aren't white men. As a Black woman, there are many jobs that would bar me if I wore cornrows, dreadlocks, or an afro—some of the most natural ways to keep up my hair. So for me, wearing my hair naturally is a meaningful declaration that I believe in my natural beauty. It's risky to make this declaration in a society that says I must aspire to whiteness have value. Compare that to fashion magazines' reception of white teenager Kylie Jenner's "epic" cornrows or "edgy" dreadlocks. When Black women have to fight for acceptance with the same styles a young white woman can be admired for, what message does that send to Black women and girls? It says that our natural beauty isn't beautiful at all—and that

our features are only appealing when they're adopted by white women.

…

7. It Perpetuates Racist Stereotypes

As Dr. Adrienne Keene of Native Appropriations puts it, "You are pretending to be a race that you are not, and are drawing upon stereotypes to do so." Katy Perry, for example, said that her performance as a geisha during the 2013 American Music Awards was an homage to Japanese culture. But she completely misrepresented what she claimed to be honoring—and used a huge platform to perpetuate negative, all-too-common stereotypes about Asian women. With her single "Unconditionally," Perry sang about undying love while playing up the image of a passive, submissive sexual object of an Asian woman. For her, it was just a character—but this stereotypical image has real consequences for Asian women in the US. Their experiences with dating, racialized sexual harassment, and fethishization reveal that white men actually expect Asian women to live up to the "exotic geisha girl" stereotype of being sexually submissive and docile.

Lauren Smash described her experiences in "Yellow Fever: Dating As an Asian Woman" like this: "It is dehumanizing at best to constantly be compared to a stereotype and to have people chasing you not as a person, but as an embodiment of the stereotypes that they use to define you." At the end of the day, Katy Perry got to take the costume off and return to the millions of dollars it helped make her and to the people who see her as a dynamic human being, and not just a demure caricature. Asian women, on the other hand, have to deal with the racist and sexist social norms that Perry helped perpetuate, which is what happens when the only mainstream image of your sexuality is a negative stereotype reinforced constantly by cultural appropriation. It's certainly not harmless or

respectful to misrepresent people's culture and spread the toxic myths that harm them.

…

9. It Prioritizes the Feelings of Privileged People over Justice for Marginalized People

One of the main objections to avoiding cultural appropriation comes down to "free speech." You should have the right to express yourself however you want to—and you do. Nobody can force you to stop taking things from other cultures. The marginalized people whose cultures are appropriated don't have the institutional power to force you to stop, even if they wanted to. But claiming that the dominant culture has a right to take freely from disempowered groups sounds a lot like the lie of the "white man's burden" from the past. Colonizers used this concept to claim they had a "duty" to take land, resources, and identity from Indigenous people—trying to justify everything from slavery to genocide. We have a lot of work to do to heal from the impact of oppression from the past through present day. Many examples of cultural appropriation may seem like not a big deal, or like we should have "more important" things to worry about. But changing oppressive everyday norms is a huge part of the work. It's one of the ways we can help stop the way society dehumanizes, erases, and ostracizes people of color. If the choice is between your freedom to wear a costume because it could be fun, or an ethnic group's ability to maintain the sacredness of a tradition that helps them resist harm, it's clear that skipping the costume puts you on the side of anti-oppression.

And, hint: That's the side you want to be on.

***

I'm not saying you automatically can't enjoy Mexican food if you're not Mexican, or do a yoga-inspired practice if you're not Indian, or use any other culturally specific practice in the U.S.

But I am encouraging you to be thoughtful about using things from other cultures, to consider the context, and learn about the best practices to show respect.

Maybe you've worn a costume you didn't know had a violent history, or you had the intention of honoring a culture in a way you didn't realize was offensive. Or you learned about these oppressive histories, but you're just now realizing that what you learned wasn't even close to the entire truth.

So now, what's your next step in incorporating this information into your anti-racist work?

Challenging stereotypes? Calling out appropriation when you see it? Spreading the word about the dire need to change the inaccurate way we learn about oppressed people's struggles?

At the very least, you know you have alternatives to disrespecting cultures that aren't your own.

Don't keep making other cultures invisible under our society's "melting pot" ambitions. Make room for all of us to thrive by having fun without oppression.

Source: Johnson 2015.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 5.4: Raced, Classed, and Gendered Media Images

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Conclusion and Discussion

Within the television industry, debates over the representation of people of color often revolve around a sort of "chicken and egg" question: Do the media create or simply reflect popular stereotypes? For example, would a film that portrayed Black women as demure intellectuals and White women as gangbangers be unsuccessful because it would seem unrealistic?

The stereotypical portrayals we see in the media today certainly were not invented by the media. Instead, they are part of our history and were created decades or even centuries ago. In this chapter, we have seen both how these stereotypes have evolved and how they continue to be part and parcel of popular media. We have also seen some of the consequences of these stereotypes: how they work to reproduce and justify racial inequalities. This raises the question of whether the media have a responsibility to try to alter stereotypes.

One recurring complaint about representations of people of color in the media is that they lack the depth of White characters. One way that this portrayal could change would be by including more people of color as writers and producers of popular media. Shonda Rhimes, the creator of the popular series *Grey's Anatomy*, *Private Practice*, *Scandal*, and *How to Get Away with Murder*, is a prominent African American woman with a significant role in creating television shows in the United States. Rhimes's shows have garnered praise both for including more characters of color and for giving those characters more depth than we are used to seeing on other shows. Thus, with the inclusion of more people of color in Hollywood as creators of media, we will perhaps see fewer stereotypes.

However, one of the most prominent African American male showrunners is Tyler Perry, who is widely criticized for his use of stereotypical depictions of Black women in his works, including *House of Payne*, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, *Madea Goes to Jail*, and many other television shows, films, and stage plays. Although Tyler Perry presumably has the ability to portray Black women in a nuanced fashion, he is still beholden to the fact that the primary motive for the entertainment industry is making a profit. For Perry, it is clear that making fun of African Americans sells. In 2011, *Forbes* magazine named Tyler Perry the highest-paid man in entertainment—with five movies and two television series, Perry earned $130 million between May 2010 and May 2011 (Pomerantz 2011). Perry's body of work shows that simply having Black producers is not enough if the goal is to reduce stereotypes.

To return to the question of the media's responsibility for reproducing stereotypes, there are two sides to this issue. On the one hand, you could argue that the media are responsible to the public, as the public constitutes their customer base. On the other hand, you could contend that the media are simply responding to market forces and giving their customers what they desire. What do you think?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 5.5: Conclusion and Discussion

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

5.1 How are racial stereotypes propagated in popular culture?

- Common stereotypes of various racial and ethnic groups are perpetuated on television and in other media.

Review

» How have representations of African Americans changed since the 1950s?

» What are some of the common stereotypes of Latinx people, Asians, and Arab Americans on television?

» What are the historical origins of stereotypical portrayals of Native Americans?

Critical Thinking

» Television shows change constantly. Do the stereotypes mentioned in this chapter apply to the shows you currently watch? Why or why not? Pick two popular shows on television and assess the extent to which the non-White characters fit into stereotypical roles. Are the Latinx characters portrayed as hypersexual? Are the Asians and Native Americans stoic? Describe at least two characters, and then assess the extent to which those characters fit into the controlling images for their group.

5.2 How have new media changed the way stereotypes are spread and countered?

- Old stereotypes prevail even in new media such as video games and social media, which have an increasingly important influence.

Review

» How do user-generated media affect the spread of stereotypes?

Critical Thinking

» Do you think social media have the potential to counter racial stereotypes, or do you think they are simply providing an arena for the proliferation of stereotypes? Use at least one example from social media to make your case.

5.3 How do media images serve to justify racial inequality?

- Media images are not harmless: they justify racial inequalities by shaping stereotypes about racial and ethnic minorities as well as about White people.

Review

» Give an example of a stereotype from the media that is used to justify racial inequality.

Critical Thinking

» To what extent are controlling images prominent in the media today?

5.4 How are media representations raced, classed, and gendered?

- Media images vary not only by racial group but also by race

and class.

Review

» To what extent are controlling images prominent in the media today?

» What are the historical origins of the “video ho” stereotype?

Critical Thinking

» Why does Patricia Hill Collins argue that media representations are race-, class-, and gender-specific?

Talking about Race

The success of television shows and films is often dependent on word of mouth. If you watch a film or television show that breaks away from traditional stereotypes, you can talk to your friends and family about it and encourage them to watch it. When you have that conversation, you can refer to what you learned in this chapter about stereotypes and the importance of broad representation. You can also post your thoughts on social media and play a larger role in promoting media that avoid negative stereotypes.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 5.6: Check Your Understanding

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

LIST OF KEY TERMS

Butterfly

controlling images

Dragon Lady

enlightened racism

Jezebel

Mammy

meme

new racism

Sapphire

6

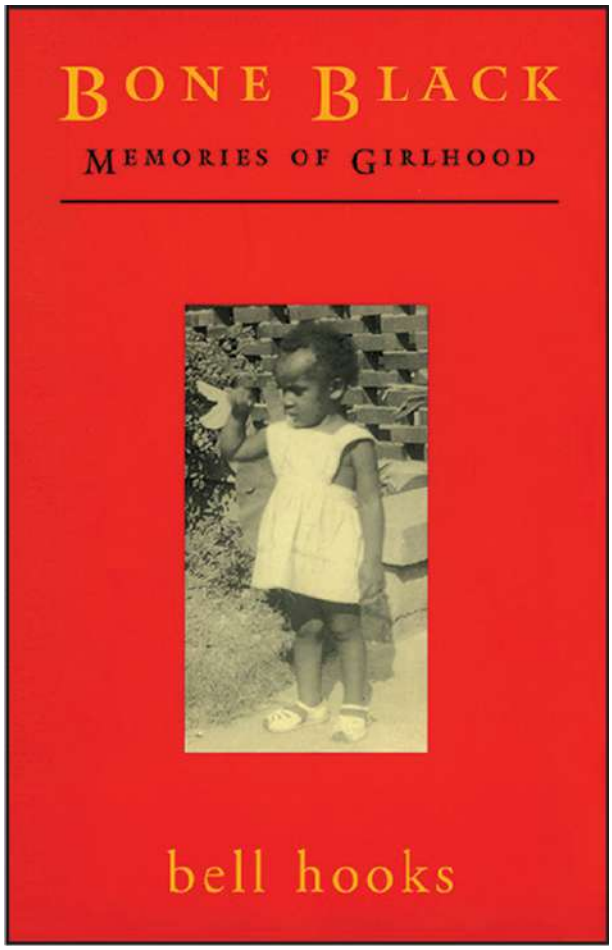
Colorism and Skin-Color Stratification

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

Social Colorism. Noe Vicente. Oil on canvas, 39.4 × 39.4 in. (*by permission of Noe Vicente*)

As You Read

- **6.1** When and how did colorism and skin-color stratification originate?
- **6.2** How does colorism differ across societies?
- **6.3** How does skin color relate to gender and beauty?



Every morning, Black men and women around the world wake up and do something to their hair. Some women spend hours straightening it. Others simply pass their fingers through or over their cropped locks. Still others wear dreadlocks or braids. How we view and treat our hair is a consequence of both societal norms about how hair should look and the reality of the hair with which we are born. In *Bone Black*, bell hooks reflects on rituals surrounding hairstyling in her childhood and early adult years.

Good hair—that's the expression. We all know it, begin to hear it when we are small children. When we are sitting between the legs of mothers and sisters getting our hair combed. Good hair is hair that is not kinky, hair that does not feel like balls of steel wool, hair that does not take hours to comb, hair that does not need tons of grease to untangle, hair that is long. Real good hair is straight hair, hair like white folk's hair. Yet no one says so. No one says your hair

is so nice, so beautiful because it is like white folk's hair. We pretend that the standards we measure our beauty by are our own invention—that it is questions of time and money that lead us to make distinctions between good hair and bad hair. I know from birth that I am lucky, lucky to have hair at all for I was bald for two years, then lucky finally to have thin, almost straight hair, hair that does not need to be hot-combed.

We are six girls who live in a house together. We have different textures of hair, short, long, thick, thin. We do not appreciate these differences. We do not celebrate the variety that is ourselves. We do not run our fingers through each other's dry hair after it is washed. We sit in the kitchen and wait our turn for the hot comb, wait to sit in the chair by the stove, smelling grease, feeling the heat warm our scalp like a sticky hot summer sun.

For each of us getting our hair pressed is an important ritual. It is not a sign of our longing to be white. It is not a sign of our quest to be beautiful. We are girls. It is a sign of our desire to be women. It is a gesture that says we are approaching womanhood—a rite of passage. Before we reach the appropriate age we wear braids and plaits that are symbols of our innocence, our youth, our childhood. Then we are comforted by the parting hands that comb and braid, comforted by the intimacy and bliss. There is a deeper intimacy in the kitchen on Saturday when hair is pressed, when fish is fried, when sodas are passed around, when soul music drifts over the talk. We are women together. This is our ritual and our time. It is a time without men. It is a time when we work to meet each other's needs, to make each other beautiful in whatever way we can. It is a time of laughter and mellow talk. Sometimes it is an occasion for tears and sorrow. Mama is angry, sick of it all, pulling the

> hair too tight, using too much grease, burning one ear and then the next.
>
> At first I cannot participate in the ritual. I have good hair that does not need pressing. Without the hot comb I remain a child, one of the uninitiated. I plead, I plead, I beg, I cry for my turn. They tell me once you start you will be sorry. You will wish you had never straightened your hair. They do not understand that it is not the straightening I seek but the chance to belong, to be one in this world of women. It is finally my turn. I am happy. Happy even though my thin hair straightened looks like black thread, has no body, stands in the air like ends of barbed wire; happy even though the sweet smell of unpressed hair is gone forever. Secretly I had hoped that the hot comb would transform me, turn the thin good hair into thick nappy hair, the kind of hair I like and long for, the kind you can do anything with, wear in all kinds of styles. I am bitterly disappointed in the new look.
>
> Later, a senior in high school, I want to wear a natural, an Afro. I want never to get my hair pressed again. It is no longer a rite of passage, a chance to be intimate in the world of women. The intimacy masks betrayal. Together we change ourselves. The closeness is an embrace before parting, a gesture of farewell to love and one another.
>
> *Source: hooks 1996.*

What you do or don't do with your hair each morning is a reflection of societal norms related to beauty, professional standards, and social worth. If you completely ignore your hair—never washing, combing, or cutting it—people likely will stare at you when you leave the house. The importance of hair, and the social value we give to certain hairstyles and not to others, are connected to ideologies about race, gender, class, and sexuality, as well as to **colorism**—an ideology related to and yet distinct from racism. Whereas racism relies on the belief that some races are better than others, colorism is the idea that, within races, lighter is better.

Whereas racism divides people into discrete categories and judges them on that basis, colorism gives differential value to people in the same racial group, based on a continuum from light to dark. Colorism primarily refers to skin color, but it also encompasses physical characteristics that are related to skin color, such as eye color, hair color and texture, and facial features (Nakano Glenn 2009). Notably, hair texture, like skin color, can operate as a perceived racial signal. Sims, Pirtle, and Johnson-Arnold (2020) conducted an experiment where they displayed photos of the same women with straight hair to one set of participants and with curly hair to another and found that hair texture consistently affected racial perceptions. The same woman could be perceived as Latina with curly hair and Black with straight hair.

Chapter 6.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

The prevalence of colorism has led to **skin-color stratification**, in which resources such as income and status are distributed unequally according to skin color. In the United States, lighter-skinned people generally have higher incomes and education than their darker-skinned counterparts and are more likely to own homes and marry. Darker-skinned people are more likely to be arrested, receive longer prison sentences and have lower job statuses on average than lighter-skinned people (Hochschild and Weaver 2007; Kizer 2017). Verna Keith and Cedric Herring (1991) found that lighter-skinned African Americans have advantages over their darker-skinned counterparts in terms of earnings, education, and occupations. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and David R. Dietrich (2009) contend that the United States is a **pigmentocracy**—a society in which Black, Asian, and Latinx people have different social statuses according to their skin color.

Skin-color stratification is also evident among immigrants to the United States from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Using data from the 2003 New Immigrant Survey, Joni Hersch (2008) found that darker-skinned immigrants generally earn less than their lighter-skinned counterparts. This nationally representative survey included interviews with people who had recently been granted legal permanent residence in the United States. Each interviewee's skin color was rated on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lightest and 10 the darkest. Overall, Hersch found that for immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, light skin color is associated with higher wages across the spectrum. There is a pay disparity of 17 percent between the lightest-skinned immigrants and the darkest-skinned immigrants, even if we account for gender, education, English-language skills, visa type, and occupation. A more recent study built on these findings—showing that dark-skinned immigrants experience less upward mobility in the United States (Han 2020). This pay disparity indicates that discrimination based on skin color likely does occur in the United States.

The History of Colorism

When and how did colorism originate, not only in the United States but also around the world? Some scholars argue that the preference for light skin stems from the history of slavery and genocide in the Americas. Their argument is that the preference for light skin is fundamentally a preference for Whiteness and thus that colorism has the same history as racism (Hunter 2005, 2007). For these thinkers, colorism is a modern phenomenon. Scholars who focus on Asia (Rondilla and Spickard 2007; Saraswati 2010, 2012) attribute the preference for light skin to earlier ideas that equated leisure with light skin and work with dark skin. Most scholars of colorism would agree that colorism is a global phenomenon, with a long history and distinct manifestations around the world.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Latinx Immigrants and the U.S. Racial Order

Reanne Frank, Ilana Redstone Akresh, and Bo Lu (2010) carried out a study designed to measure the amount of skin-color discrimination Latinx immigrants face in the labor market in the United States. They drew from a 2003 survey of about 1,000 Latinx immigrants that included a measure of skin color. Frank and her colleagues used this statistical data to figure out whether skin color affects the earnings of Latinx people in the United States. They found that, after accounting for relevant differences between dark- and light-skinned Latinx people, darker-skinned Latinx people earn, on average, $2,500 less per year than their lighter-skinned counterparts.

This study used statistical techniques to account for a variety of factors that could influence income. Instead of simply comparing the incomes of dark- and light-skinned Latinx people, Frank and her colleagues took into account the number of years the Latinx immigrants had been in the United States, their age when they migrated, their gender, their occupational prestige, their region of origin, their years of education, and other factors associated with earnings. They found that, even accounting for all of these factors, lighter-skinned Latinx people earn more than darker-skinned Latinx people.

Frank and her colleagues argue that lighter-skinned Latinx people earn more because they face discrimination in the labor market. They did not speak directly with employers to find out if they prefer lighter-skinned Latinx people but they were able to infer, based on the relative earnings of light- and dark-skinned Latinx people, that skin-color discrimination must be a factor in the labor market.

For Discussion

1. Do you think that Frank and her colleagues found evidence of skin-color stratification, colorism, or both? Explain your answer.
2. Why might some employers demonstrate a preference for lighter-skinned Latinx people over darker-skinned Latinx people?

Source: Frank, Akresh, and Lu 2010.

The Origins of Colorism in the Americas

Colorism has existed in the United States since the colonial era. The Africans who were brought to the North American colonies as slaves were primarily dark-skinned. Soon after the arrival of Africans in the Americas, the progeny of Black people and White people became a new class of mixed-race people, known as **mulattos**, who were darker than White people but lighter than Black people. At first, mulattos were officially recognized as a distinct category in the United States. In fact, the U.S. census included a mulatto category from 1850 to 1910. However, eventually both law and social custom changed, and **hypodescent**—the idea that having any amount of Black ancestry makes you Black—became more prevalent.

Each state had the authority to define which people would be classified as Black. In some states, an individual was legally Black if one of his or her grandparents was Black (i.e., if he or she was one-quarter Black). In other states, an individual was Black if his or her great-grandparents were Black. In still other states, an individual was considered Black if he or she was one-thirty-second Black. These laws were eventually abolished in the 1960s (Telles 2009). However, they have had a lasting impact, in that people with relatively little African ancestry (and thus very light skin) can be considered Black. The existence of a wide color spectrum in the Black community is one factor that has enabled colorism to flourish.

Skin-color stratification was prevalent during the era of slavery: lighter-skinned slaves were more likely to work in the house instead of the fields, to be taught to read, and to be manumitted (freed). The manumission of some led to a small class of freedmen, who tended to be lighter in skin tone than their enslaved counterparts. These lighter-skinned Black people eventually formed the core of the Black elite in the United States; hence, skin color has been mapped onto social status in the African American community for centuries (Hunter 2005).

The association of light skin with elite status continued into the twentieth century. Jewish American anthropologist Melville Herskovits conducted a study of Black people in Harlem in the 1920s and found that the Black elite was disproportionately light-skinned and that Black men preferred light-skinned partners. His study revealed that whereas only 9 percent of Harlem Black elites were very dark-skinned, 28.9 percent of the elites were very light-skinned. Herskovits also found that in over half of Harlem couples, wives were lighter than husbands, revealing that men often preferred lighter-skinned women and that women were able to marry higher-status darker-skinned men. Within the Black community, lighter skin was valued more highly than dark skin. Additionally, light skin became associated with elite status. Thus, the desire to be light was connected both to the idea that White was better and to the idea that light skin meant higher class.

In Harlem in the 1920s, the Black elite were disproportionately light-skinned.

Consequently, skin bleaches and hair straighteners became very common in Harlem in the 1920s. Skin bleaches that promised to provide women with "light skin that men can't resist" formed a substantial portion of the cosmetics products sold in Harlem at the time (Dorman 2011). The practice of skin bleaching persists today: Christopher A. D. Charles (2011) found that pharmacies and beauty supply stores in Harlem were still selling bleaching products in 2010. Moreover, the labels on these products devalued Black skin by promising to help customers with "problems" associated with dark skin.

In Latin America, a skin-color hierarchy has existed for centuries. During the period that Latin American countries were Spanish colonies, the Spaniards developed an elaborate system of *castas* based on ancestry that determined one's social and legal ranking in society. By the end of the

colonial period in 1821, over 100 possible categories were memorialized in a series of *casta* paintings. The categories included *españoles* (Spaniards), *indios* (indigenous people), ***mestizos*** (persons with one Spanish and one indigenous parent), *castizos* (persons with one *mestizo* parent and one Spanish parent), and *mulatos* (persons with one African parent and one Spanish parent). The categories went on to divide people into over 100 different possible mixtures, each with its own name. These categories were based on ancestry, not color. Nevertheless, we can say that, generally, more Spanish ancestry meant both lighter skin and more prestige. These categories are no longer used in Latin America, but the inequalities that stemmed from them persist (Telles and Steele 2012).

Over one hundred social categories can be identified in these casta paintings from the Spanish colonies.

Brazil, in contrast to the United States and Spanish America, never had a system of official classification whereby a person with a certain amount of African ancestry would be legally considered Black. Instead, in Brazil, usually only a person who looks Black is considered Black, whereas a person who looks White is considered White, regardless of his or her actual ancestry. The Brazilian census classifies people as White, ***pardo*** (Brown), and Black, and the term *mulatto* [*mulato* in Portuguese] is used in everyday language to describe people who are neither Black nor White. There is a certain amount of fluidity between these categories, and many families report Black people, White people, and *pardos* in their households on the Brazilian census. Although Brazil has never had laws that mandated racial segregation, racial inequality exists, and privilege is mapped along color lines, with lighter- skinned people generally having more education and income (Telles 2009). The presence of skin-color stratification in Brazil today is a relic of colonialism.

The Origins of Colorism in Asia and Africa

The preference for light skin in the Americas seems to have its roots in the period of colonization. In contrast, Asia has a longer history of colorism. As early as the late ninth century, the ancient Sanskrit text *Ramayana* featured light skin as ideal. Ayu Saraswati (2010) explains that in both the Indian and Indonesian versions of this text, beautiful women are described as having white faces that shine like the full moon. Aryan Indians spread their preference for white skin to the rest of South and Southeast Asia. In Indonesia, this predilection for light skin was reinforced during the Dutch colonial period in the nineteenth century. Colonial authorities granted preferential treatment to persons of mixed Dutch-Indonesian ancestry. When the Japanese became the colonial power in Indonesia in 1942, they also brought their fondness for lightness with them. And U.S. popular culture has made its mark in Indonesia through advertising, with blue-eyed blonds staring out of images in this

primarily non-White country. In Indonesia today, dark-skinned people continue to be seen as unattractive and undesirable. As in other places, this social pattern has clear gendered dimensions: women feel more pressure than men do to alter their appearance and lighten their skin (Saraswati 2012).

What about preferences in Africa? Was there preference for light skin in this region prior to the arrival of Europeans? There are people of every skin shade on the African continent, with lighter-skinned people living in the north and those with darker skin living close to the Equator and in the south. Anthropologist Peter Frost (2006) has reviewed the evidence from several African tribes and found some evidence that a preference for lighter skin predates colonialism in Africa. In many tribes, women with brown or reddish skin are seen as more beautiful than those with very dark skin, and there are indications that these preferences are deeply rooted in these societies. For example, the languages of many tribes include value-laden terms that distinguish between skin color, and early-twentieth-century anthropologists found preferences for lighter skin even among older Africans who were born before the arrival of Europeans in their communities (Frost 2006). Whether or not the preference for light skin predates colonialism is an unresolved question. However, it is clear that the obsession with light skin increased with colonization and the presence of large numbers of Europeans in Africa. In South Africa, for example, skin lighteners have been available since the 1930s (Thomas 2009).

The preference for light skin seems nearly universal. Despite varying local histories, these preferences have converged in the current era as a result of cultural globalization and the spread of transnational corporations that tend to promote Whiter or lighter beauty ideals.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 6.1: The History of Colorism

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The Global Color Hierarchy

How does colorism differ across societies? Consider a 2016 commercial from Thailand for a product called Snowz, skin-whitening pills with the slogan “white makes you win.” In the television advertisement, Cris Horwang—a thirty-five-year-old actress, model, singer, and dance teacher—explains that the whiteness she has achieved through beauty products has brought her fame. She says: “Before I got to this point, the competition was very high. If I stop taking care of myself, everything I have worked for, the whiteness I have invested in, may be lost.” As she is talking, a younger model comes onto the screen, and Cris’s skin slowly fades to charcoal-black. She looks at her dark skin with despondence, and the narrator says, “Whiteness makes you win.” The younger model smiles as the narrator adds that Snowz contains glutathione, derived from kiwi seeds which “helps you not return to black.” After the Snowz pills appear on the screen, Cris turns white again, and smiles return to her face.

In Thailand, a 2016 commercial for a skin-whitening pill called Snowz proclaimed, “Just being white, you will win.”

Chapter 6.2 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Skin-whitening products are prevalent not only in Asia but also in Latin America, Africa, and the United States. They are evidence of a **global color hierarchy**, in which white (or light) skin is privileged and people—especially, but not exclusively, women—strive to become lighter. These dynamics play out differently in distinct areas of the world.

In this section, we will examine three areas of the world: Asia, Latin America, and Africa, as well as the **diaspora**, or dispersion, of their populations in the United States.

Asia and Asian Americans

The privileging of light skin in Asia and among Asian Americans has its roots in ancient Aryan Indian beauty ideals, Japanese and Chinese ideas of white skin as a sign of leisure, and colonial domination of India and Indonesia by European powers. Today, women from Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam, Japan, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, and India use skin-whitening creams in an effort to make their skin as light as possible, and they even undergo eyelid surgery to widen their eyes (Saraswati 2010, 2012). In India, the preference for light skin is also connected to the caste system. Although it is not the case that all high-caste members (Brahmins) are light, a pattern can be seen whereby higher-caste people in India tend to be lighter than those of lower caste. In addition, the term for caste, *varna*, literally means "color," and there has been some historical association of Brahmins with whiteness and the untouchables with blackness. In India and across Asia, there are historical and present-day advantages associated with light skin, especially for women (Parameswaran and Cardoza 2009).

These preferences for light skin in Asia have carried over to Asian Americans in the United States. Research by Joanne Rondilla and Paul Spickard (2007) reveals a fascinating aspect of skin-tone discrimination among Asian Americans: the preference for light skin is omnipresent, yet Asian Americans do not want to be *too* white. The researchers tell the stories of a Vietnamese American woman who uses a destructive skin-whitening cream because she feels excluded by her ethnic group and a Filipina woman who stays out of the sun to avoid being called "dark." On the flip side, they also describe a Chinese woman whose great-grandmother was French who is excluded from social groups because her freckles and reddish hair make her look too White, as well as a woman whose mother is Japanese and father is White who struggles to feel accepted in either community. Based on these interviews and other evidence, Rondilla and Spickard argue that light skin is preferred in Asian American communities, but that this does not signal a desire for Whiteness.

VOICES

Neha Dixit

Satirical depiction of Indian marriage ads to highlight colorism Source: Illustration by Srishti Guptaroy for BRIGHT Magazine.

When I was born, my paternal grandmother wrote a letter to my maternal grandfather, warning, “A girl is born. She is dark complexioned. You better prepare for her future.”

It is not clear if my grandfather was offended by the doomsday prophecy for the dark-skinned me, or if he just wanted to win the upper hand. He wrote back to her, “Those who think [her future is bleak] should look at their faces in a dirty puddle.” His response created a rift between my paternal and maternal family that has never healed.

I grew up in north India in the 1990s. My Brahmin family was full of government servants who were still carrying the colonial white

man's burden of racial prejudices and superiority complexes. Growing up in the close proximity of a large extended family, I was the only dark child. "Kaali-kaluti, baigan looti / Blacky-black smeared, she robbed the color of an eggplant," my cousins would taunt when they wanted to have a laugh at my expense. I laughed along with them, eager to fit in.

My skin color was particularly concerning to my mother, since we were an upper-caste Brahmin family. Anytime someone would call me dark, my fair-skinned mother would correct them and tell them I was "wheatish," one of the many euphemisms in India for brown skin. It was her way of comforting herself that her daughter was a tad bit higher in the hierarchy than truly dark people.

During a trip to a north Indian village, an old woman walked up to me to say, "Every morning, at 5 a.m., you should drink half a cup of fresh, non-boiled cow milk. The complexion of your child-to-be will be fair." I plastered a smile on my face. I was not even pregnant. But colorism runs so deep that this was the best advice she thought to offer me.

Women have passed on similar age old "wisdom" to attain fairness for generations. "Apply gram flour, milk, and turmeric on her face daily," my mother was told when I was a kid, so I "would not look like a Madrasan anymore." Madrasan refers to a person from the southern city of Madras, now Chennai. North Indians are typically lighter skinned than South Indians, who live in a hotter climate.

As a dark girl who did not use bleaching or fairness products, my family thought I spent my life compensating for my "unfortunate" complexion. Whether it was doing well in school, riding a heavy power scooter (unthinkable for a teenage girl in small-town India), or being the first girl in the family to pursue higher education in another city, not having to worry about protecting my skin turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

I have been able to hold a steady career as a journalist, be financially independent, and be the first girl in my extended family to

choose her own life partner—all seen as ways I have made up for not being "good looking," or more accurately, light-skinned.

My dark complexion turned out to be a ticket to freedom.

Source: Dexit 2019

Latin America and Latinx People

In Latin America, people of mixed ancestry have historically been considered *mulatos* (when they have African and European ancestry) or *mestizos* (when they have European and indigenous ancestry). *Mestizo* is an official classification in Mexico, Peru, and other countries, and *pardo* (brown) is an official classification in Brazil. Within this system, only people who are very dark-skinned are considered Black, and only those who both are dark-skinned and display indigenous cultural features are considered indigenous (Golash-Boza 2011). Thus, you could find a family in which one child is considered Black, another mulato, and still another White. In these families, it is often the case that the lighter-skinned children are given preferential treatment (Twine 1998; Hordge-Freeman 2015). Latin Americans often strategically choose romantic partners who are lighter in skin tone than themselves, with the hope that their children will be lighter and thus better positioned in society. In Spanish, this strategy is called *mejorando la raza*, or improving the race, and is common across Latin America (Sue 2009).

Latin American countries are marked by a skin-color hierarchy, in which lighter-skinned people possess a disproportionate share of the resources. Because of the existence of intermediate categories, we can say that White people are often at the top of the hierarchy, mestizos and mulatos in the middle, and Black people and indigenous people at the bottom (Telles and Steele 2012).

Edward Telles and Liza Steele (2012) conducted a study in which they compared skin color and educational attainment across Latin America.

They wanted to know whether or not lighter-skinned Latin Americans are more likely to complete high school and go to college than darker-skinned Latin Americans. Using a recent and innovative dataset that contained information about skin color and education for nearly 40,000 people in twenty-three Latin American countries, they were able to explore the relationship between skin color and each respondent's educational attainment. These data allowed them to ask if lighter-skinned people completed more years of schooling on average than darker-skinned people. In most Latin American and Caribbean countries, they found that lighter-skinned people were more likely to have higher educational attainment than darker-skinned people. This trend was most prominent in Andean countries such as Peru and Bolivia, where darker-skinned people receive an average of eight years of schooling, as compared to the thirteen years received by lighter-skinned people. In all the countries except four—Panama, Suriname, Belize, and Guyana—their study revealed that lighter-skinned people had more years of education than darker-skinned people. A study of 2,935 Mexican adults and adolescents in Mexico confirmed that not only do darker-skinned people have less education, but that they also have lower wages and are less likely to experience upward mobility than their darker-skinned counterparts (Campos-Vaszquez and Medina-Cortina 2019).

The prevalence of skin-color stratification in Latin America raises the question of whether this stratification is also present among Latin American immigrants in the United States. Do lighter-skinned Latinx people in the United States have more education, income, and resources? Recent studies help us to understand the extent of skin color stratification among Latinxs in the United States today.

Using a wide variety of measures, researchers have consistently found that Latinx people with darker skin tones are disadvantaged relative to their lighter-skinned counterparts. Visser (2016) found that darker-skinned Puerto Ricans experience lower job quality relative to their lighter-skinned counterparts. Alexis Rosenblum and colleagues (2016) found that Latin American immigrants with darker skin tones earn less

than their lighter-skinned counterparts, even when taking into account other relevant factors such as age, education, and labor market experience. Several studies have found that Latinx people with darker skin are more likely to be stopped and arrested by police officers (White 2015; Alcalá and Montoya 2018; Finkeldey and Demuth 2019). Ekeoma Uzogara (2019) found that medium- and darker-skinned Latinas experienced more discrimination than light-skinned Latinas in Chicago. These studies all confirm that skin color matters for Latinx Americans.

Africa and the African Diaspora

Jemima Pierre (2008) describes a scene in downtown Accra, Ghana, where large billboards that feature a very light-skinned African woman to advertise *Gel Eclaircissant*—a bleaching treatment—are plastered across the town. Pierre asks how Ghana, "a proud Black postcolonial African nation with an established history of Pan-Africanism," can have such blatant anti-Black advertisements. To answer this question, Pierre argues that skin-bleaching practices are a reflection of the ways that processes of racialization are alive and well in postcolonial Ghana. Thus, even though Ghana is a proud, Black nation, it is not immune to global White supremacy. It is through global White supremacy that Ghana and other African nations are connected to the African diaspora, where a preference for light skin is prevalent. Additionally, many African countries are marked by a hierarchy in which lighter-skinned, mixed-race people occupy more positions of power and have more economic resources than darker-skinned people (Lewis, Robkin, Gaska, and Njoki 2011).

Skin bleaching has become common throughout Africa (Sagoe et al 2019 and see Figure 6.1). Studies have revealed that as many as 25 percent of women in Mali; 30 percent of women in Tanzania; 52 percent of women in Dakar, Senegal; 66 percent of people in Brazzaville, Congo; 75 percent of people in Lagos, Nigeria; and 60 percent of women in Zambia use skin-

bleaching products (Kpanake, Munoz Sastre, and Mullet 2009; Lewis et al. 2011).

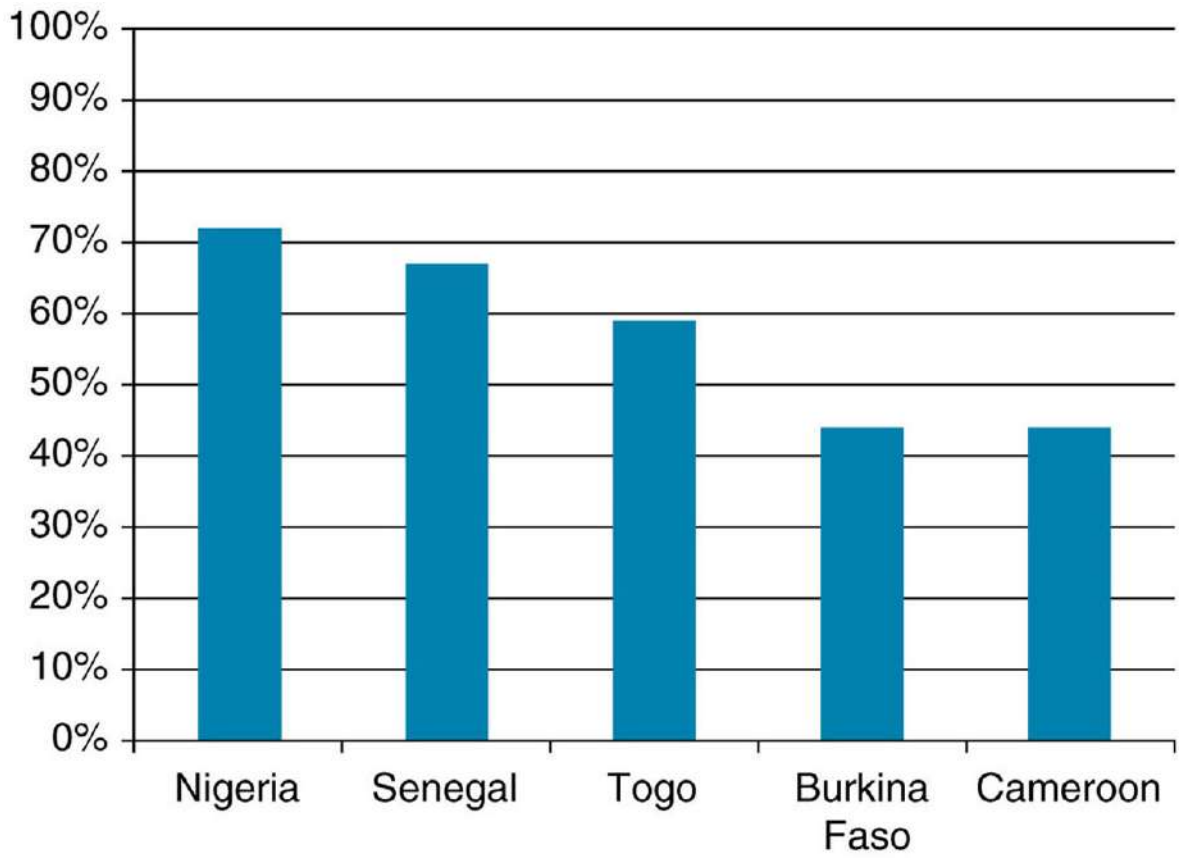


FIGURE 6-1 Percentage of Women in African Countries Who Use Skin-Bleaching Products Source: Davids et al. (2016).

Why? In Tanzania, a team of scholars (Lewis et al. 2011) interviewed forty-two women to ask them why they used skin-bleaching products, even though these products are known to cause severe skin damage, skin cancer, and brain disease. Tanzanian women gave six primary reasons for why they bleached their skin: (1) to remove acne, (2) to have soft skin, (3) to be more white, (4) to remove dark patches, (5) to attract men, and (6) to impress peers. Women gave a variety of reasons for why they used these creams, but the desire to look better was at the center of all of them. For many, the desire to look better was connected to looking whiter. One woman said she started bleaching "to be beautiful and to look like Arabians or Europeans and attractive to people especially men" (33). In a

similar study in Togo, Lonzozou Kpanake, María Teresa Muñoz Sastre, and Etienne Mullet (2009) interviewed 300 men and women who reported using skin-bleaching creams and found that they gave a variety of reasons for doing so, including wanting to be considered important, civilized, and attractive, and to have lighter and softer skin. The prevalence of skin bleaching in a variety of African countries demonstrates that Africans continue to privilege light skin.

In a study of skin bleaching in Jamaica, Christopher A. D. Charles (2009) interviewed thirty-six women and twenty-two men who bleached their skin. He found that most of them bleached their skin either to remove facial blemishes, to lighten their skin, or to look more beautiful. Although more than 90 percent of Jamaicans are Black, light skin is viewed as socially desirable among both men and women. For this reason, people who bleached their skin often thought that having lighter skin would make them more attractive. In the United States, skin bleaching was common among African Americans in Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s. Since then, we have seen the rise of the "Black is beautiful" movement and an embrace of Blackness among African Americans. There is some evidence that these social movements have alleviated colorism among Black Americans. However, colorism has not completely dissipated.

A billboard advertising a skin-lightening product called “Khess Petch” in Dakar, Senegal.

A study by Jeffri Anne Wilder (2010) reveals the extent to which colorism continues to be embedded in the African American community. Wilder conducted focus groups with fifty-eight African American women in which she probed them about skin-color labels and their meanings. Wilder found that a wide variety of labels are used to describe light-skinned Black people, quite a few are used to describe darker-skinned Black people, and just four are used to describe those of medium skin tone. The wide variety of labels used indicates the importance of skin tone in the African American community. Whereas the terms used to describe medium skin—brown, milk chocolate, caramel, and pecan tan—were neutral, those used to describe light and dark skin were not. Terms for light skin included “house nigga” and “pretty skin,” while those for dark skin included “jigaboo” and “tar baby.” The association of lightness with “pretty skin” indicates that many African Americans view light skin to be

more beautiful than dark skin. At the same time, use of the term “house nigga” is a reference to slavery and to the implication that those with light skin may be less authentically Black. Wilder found in her focus groups that many African Americans view lighter-skinned women as more beautiful, intelligent, and refined than their darker-skinned counterparts.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Skin Tone and School Suspension

A study by Lance Hannon, Robert DeFina, and Sarah Bruch (2013) examined whether children's skin tone affects their likelihood of suspension from school. Previous research had found that Black children are more likely to be suspended than White children.

The scale of skin-color darkness used by the research team.

Hannon, DeFina, and Bruch considered this effect in terms of variation within the Black community, both by skin tone and gender. Suspension is important not only because it is a punishment inflicted on schoolchildren but also because suspensions can have long-term, cumulative effects. For example, children who have been suspended from school are more likely to end up in prison than those who have never been suspended. In addition, African Americans with darker skin tone face harsher punishments in the criminal justice system.

Hannon et al.'s study sought to discover whether similar discrimination happens with school-based discipline. The study was conducted among two separate national samples of African Americans. To measure skin tone, the authors used a scale designed by Douglas Massey and and Jennifer A. Martin called The National Immigrant Survey Skin Color Scale.

The study found that having a darker skin tone increased the likelihood of school suspension: each darker gradation resulted in a slightly higher chance of being suspended. This effect was most pronounced for African American girls. Overall, 38 percent of the Black girls in the study reported that they had been suspended at least once, compared with 53 percent of the Black boys. However, these results varied further by skin color. Black male students with the lightest skin had about a 48 percent chance of having been suspended, compared with a 69 percent chance for those with the darkest skin. For girls, the range was from 28 percent (lightest skin) to 58 percent (darkest skin). Thus, whereas for light-skinned African American girls and boys there is a large difference in the likelihood of ever having been suspended (28 percent for girls versus 48 percent for boys), the difference is smaller between dark-skinned African American girls and boys (58 percent for girls versus 69 percent for boys).

The authors conclude that skin tone affects suspension rates for both Black girls and Black boys but that there is more variation in suspension rates for Black girls. They argue that this finding reveals how various forms of oppression intersect. The negative consequences of having dark skin are not exactly the same for Black boys and girls. Instead, due to dominant beliefs about femininity and beauty, darker-skinned Black girls face additional layers of discrimination not faced by lighter-skinned Black girls.

For Discussion

1. What are some disadvantages dark-skinned African American girls might face at school that lighter-skinned African American girls may be less likely to face?
2. What do you think of the skin-tone scale? Do you think it captures meaningful variations?

Source: Hannon, DeFina, and Bruch 2013.

There is evidence that these preferences for light skin are connected to real, material rewards for being light. In the United States, historically, lighter-skinned African Americans have had more resources than darker-skinned African Americans and have tended to pass those resources down to their children. Ongoing discrimination exacerbates these inequalities. Colorism is a prominent aspect of inequality for African Americans in the criminal justice system: studies have shown that darker-skinned Black people get longer prison sentences than Black people with lighter skin and that darker-skinned Black people are more likely to receive the death penalty (Hochschild and Weaver 2007). The preference for light skin also plays out in hiring decisions: one experimental study showed that White employers were more likely to hire a lighter-skinned African American over a darker-skinned African American (Hochschild and Weaver 2007). Relatedly, Ellis Monk (2014) found that skin tone affects outcomes related to Black Americans' educational attainment, household income, occupational status, and even the skin tone and educational attainment of their spouses. Notably, lighter-skinned Black Americans have, on average, one full year more of education than darker-skinned Black Americans. In addition, Black Americans with "very dark skin" have 73 percent higher odds of having a less prestigious occupation than their lighter-skinned counterparts (Monk 2014).

VOICES

Why Black People Discriminate among Ourselves: The Toxic Legacy of Colorism

by Kaitlyn Greenidge

My grandmother was a great beauty. Everybody said so.

"Like a black Elizabeth Taylor," was the comment heard most often, because her eyes looked violet in some light. She had a perfect hourglass figure, large clear eyes, a tiny waist, long slim hands, a killer sense of dress and smooth dark skin.

The only trait I shared with her was her skin color. My mother always spoke of this with pride. It was a treasure to be kept whole through diligent care—applications of thick, pasty Eucerin lotion, which used to come in a tub, worked into the skin as it melted down and made everything smooth and shiny. My grandmother used the silkier Nivea instead—kept on the dresser in her all-white bedroom, applied throughout the day. The smell of it still reminds me of the elegance of her life.

That dark skin was the most beautiful was the logic of my family. Growing up, all my Barbies and baby dolls had skin as dark as mine. This was my mother's conscious choice. She stocked our bookshelves with black children's books, bought toys and games with black characters. She worked hard to make sure our home was a place where blackness was always celebrated. She was keenly aware, as the mother of three black girls, how the world would treat us, regardless of our varying shades.

Looking back, I think this probably had to do with her own skin color—my mother was much lighter than my grandmother, with a spray of freckles across her nose. In my grandmother's house, my mother's high school portrait sat on the mantle—it was a photograph retouched with oil. The painter had lightened my mother's skin to an anemic grayish yellow, given her green eyes, and thinned her nose. "He thought she was Italian," I remember my grandmother telling

me, as explanation. My mother hated that picture, the erasure of her blackness. I haven't seen it since my grandmother died.

Growing up in the supportive environment my mother created for us, I assumed into early adulthood that colorism was a thing of the past. Colorism—the prejudice based on skin tone, usually with a marked preference for lighter-skinned people—was something I read about in novels. It seemed quaint, like pin curls or cellophane. There was a slight troubling when I would watch TV shows such as *Martin* or movies like *Coming to America*, and the love interest was always light and the girls my color were shrews—too fast, too forward, too sarcastic to be loved. But at least these were movies with people who looked like me, and it hurt less to ignore my misgivings and just enjoy seeing a woman like myself on the screen, even if she was there only for the protagonist to screw his face up at in disgust.

For reassurance that these scenarios were just fiction, all I had to do was look at my grandparents' marriage—my grandmother as dark as me and my grandfather, who adored her, much lighter.

It is a sad and sobering fact to realize that color—how dark or light you are perceived as being by a prospective partner, who most likely is someone of your own race—sometimes determines who in our communities is deemed deserving of romance. The question of desirability, of who we believe is worthy of love, is what led me to read more about colorism.

I went deeper into my colorism research, and what I found let me know that colorism is still alive and well. I started with the marriage market, and found out dark-skinned women are less likely to be married than lighter-skinned women. But colorism shows up in even starker ways: the difference in pay rates between darker-skinned and lighter-skinned men mirrors the differences in pay between White people and Black people. Darker-skinned women are given longer prison sentences than their light-skinned counterparts. And this discrimination starts young—if you are a dark-skinned girl, you

are three times more likely to be suspended from school than your light skinned peers.

Even more insidious, colorism even affects how we are remembered. Lighter-skinned black people are perceived to be more intelligent. Educated black people, regardless of their actual skin color, are remembered by job interviewers as having lighter skin.

The daily toll of living with colorism is inescapable. Darker-skinned people report higher experiences of microaggressions; heavier-set dark-skinned men report the highest levels of microaggressions. All of this affects our mental health and wellbeing. Darker-skinned black women report more physiological deterioration and self-report worse health than lighter-skinned women.

Wage and punishment inequity and our skewed perception by the professional world make more sense to me, because they operate on the cold logic of white supremacy. They are describing interactions with a wider, non-black world and take into account how both white and black people view skin color. But the facts around relationships and dating don't make any sense to me: given the relatively low rates of interracial marriage for black women in the U.S., we are talking about perceptions and prejudices within the black community—how we treat each other, our own internalized white supremacy.

I began to realize the importance of distinguishing between colorism as practiced by white power structures like courts, schools and businesses, and colorism as practiced within the black community, evidenced when we talk about marriage statistics and measurements of color.

The former seems easier for many black people to acknowledge. The latter is less explicitly talked about. To do so is to begin to unpack internalized white supremacy, something most people are unwilling to do because it can be so painful.

I am not sure how we get free from the trap of colorism, but as with most things in life, I know it begins with being able to talk about

it openly. When I was a child, the love and pride my grandmother took in her color, the assumption of dignity and elegance, was an unspoken guide to how to navigate the world.

But I think the time has come to be explicit in our strategies, to have the difficult conversations, to acknowledge when they make us uncomfortable, or remind us of our own individual pain. To have your life dictated by something you are not even allowed to name is a special kind of cruelty. The way to begin to combat it is to try to speak about it.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 6.2: The Global Color Hierarchy

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Skin Color, Gender, and Beauty

How does skin color relate to gender and beauty? Colorism is evident in the U.S. entertainment industry, especially for women of color. Many of the most prominent Latina stars—Salma Hayek, Jennifer Lopez, Jessica Alba, Victoria Justice, and Gina Rodriguez—are very light-skinned. Light-skinned artists of color are more likely to rise to fame because light skin is associated with beauty both in the United States and around the globe. Margaret Hunter (2005) explains that beauty, like colorism, is an ideology that can be used as a tool to maintain **patriarchy**, or male dominance in a society. Beauty divides women through competition and diverts their attention to their physical appearance and away from other oppressive forces in their lives.

In the United States, light skin, long hair, light eyes, and straight noses are all associated with beauty—and with Whiteness. When a woman is called "fair," this label refers both to light skin and to physical attractiveness. Thus, African American women with long, straight hair and light skin are often perceived to be more attractive than their darker-skinned counterparts. Of course, there is individual preference and variation. Yet studies have consistently shown that dark-skinned women are devalued both by their co-ethnics and by White people (Hunter 2005).

Hunter (2005, 70–71) introduces the concept of a **beauty queue** to explain "how sexism and racism interact to create a queue of women from the lightest to the darkest, where the lightest get the most resources and the darkest get the least. The lightest women get access to more resources because not only are they lighter-skinned and therefore racially privileged, but their light skin is interpreted in our culture as more beautiful and therefore they are also privileged as beautiful women." For

women, beauty is an asset that can lead to better jobs, better pay, and more status. Because lighter women are seen as more beautiful, they can be considered to have **skin-color privilege**, even if they belong to a disadvantaged racial group.

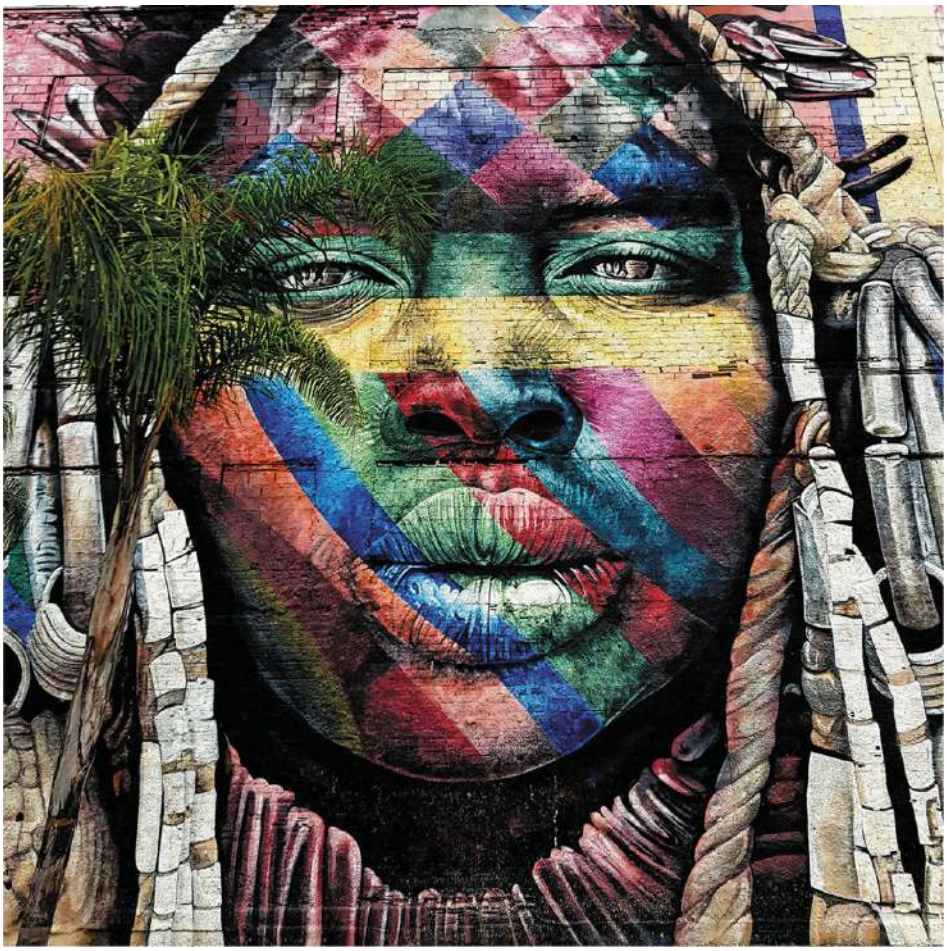
Siobhan Brooks (2010) uses the concept of **erotic capital** to explain how skin color relates to beauty for women of color. Doing research with strip club workers, Brooks found that White women often earned more than Black and Latinx women, but that light-skinned Black and Latinx women were able to use their erotic capital—their attractiveness and sensuality—to earn more than darker-skinned Black women. Whereas lighter-skinned Black and Latinx women were seen as exotic, dark-skinned Black women were perceived as hypersexual and thus devalued. Similar to Hunter (2007), Brooks found evidence of a beauty queue, in which White women earned the most, followed by lighter-skinned Black people and Latinas, and then darker-skinned women. In the case of strip clubs, being Whiter or lighter had material advantages.

Although there are clear advantages to being light-skinned, there is also evidence that women of color do not necessarily want to be White, even if they prefer lighter skin. Dionne Stephens and Paula Fernández (2011) interviewed thirty-four Hispanic women to shed light on their perspective on the relationship between skin color and attractiveness. The researchers found that "having 'some color' was viewed as an important symbol of [the women's] 'authentic' Hispanic identity" (85). The women they interviewed specifically stated that they did not desire white skin, but that they preferred to be tan and viewed being tan as being attractive and sexy. Notably, the women also did not want to be "black" or too dark.

Many Latina stars, such as Selena Gomez, are very light-skinned—a trait often associated with beauty around the globe.

This research is also relevant for Asian Americans. Rondilla and Spickard (2007) interviewed ninety-nine Asian Americans about their skin-color preferences. They found that respondents widely agreed that lighter skin was better in that it was associated with beauty, intelligence, and high class. Women and men recalled being told by their parents not to marry too dark so they could have light-skinned children. As part of the interview process, the researchers showed interviewees a picture of three conventionally beautiful Asian American women and asked them to make up a story about each woman. One woman had light skin, hair, and eyes; another was medium-toned and had black hair; and the third was dark-skinned. The stories about the medium-toned women were the most positive: she was seen as smart, wealthy, and stylish. In contrast, the dark-skinned woman was seen as likely an immigrant, poor, and

hardworking. The stories about the lightest woman were not positive either: interviewees saw her as confused about her identity, lazy, a partygoer, and unhappy. These findings reveal that Asian Americans have an abstract desire for Whiteness but do not desire features that make them look too White. In her later work, Joanne Rondilla (2009) argues that Asian women do not use skin lighteners in an attempt to become White; instead, they use them out of a wish to become a better version of themselves.



Mural das Etnias, Rio de Janeiro, painted by the artist Eduardo Kobra.

This research has parallels with work conducted in other parts of the world. Aisha Khan (2009) argues that although there is a color hierarchy in Indo-Trinidadian society, the ultimate desire is to become light, but not White, as Whiteness signifies cultural loss. Lynn Thomas (2009) points

out that in South Africa, women use skin lighteners not to become White but to attain a lighter shade of black. Christina Sue (2009) contends that people in Veracruz, Mexico, use *mestizaje* as a whitening strategy to become lighter mestizos, not to become White. Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2009) argues that Filipinas associate light skin with modernity and social mobility, not necessarily with Whiteness. And Ayu Saraswati (2012) finds that Indonesian women use skin whiteners to become lighter, but not to become Caucasian or to attain the light skin of Chinese women. Instead, they prefer Indonesian Whiteness.

In a study of beauty pageants in Nigeria, Oluwakemi M. Balogun (2012) examined two beauty pageants: the Queen Nigeria pageant, which focuses primarily on Nigeria, and the Most Beautiful Girl in Nigeria pageant, which is geared to a more international audience and is connected to the Miss Universe and Miss World pageants. Balogun found that beauty pageant directors did not ignore skin color, nor did they give universal preference to light skin. Instead, they chose dark-skinned women when their goal was to find an authentic African woman to represent their country to the world and lighter-skinned women when they were searching for a woman with global mass appeal as a beautiful woman.

Most of these works on skin color focus on women, as colorism is a gendered dynamic. Skin-color valuations more heavily affect women's lives than men's. Jyostna Vaid (2009) highlights the increasing salience of skin color, as well as the gendered nature of judgments based on skin color, for Indians in India and the diaspora. Vaid found that Indian women are twice as likely as men to mention skin color in marriage ads, signaling that skin color is more important in marriage negotiations for women than for men. Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2009) conceptualizes light skin as a form of symbolic capital and makes the case that this form of capital is more important for women than for men. Ayu Saraswati (2012) interviewed forty-six Indonesian women about their use of skin-whitening creams and found that many of the women had experienced discrimination and denigration because of their dark skin color. Many had received comments on their skin color when they were girls and used

skin-whitening creams to hide what they viewed to be a deficiency—their dark skin. Whereas dark skin can be seen as masculine, and thus appropriate, for men, Saraswati found that women in Indonesia overwhelmingly preferred light skin. Moreover, women around the world feel more pressure than men to be beautiful (Hunter 2005). A study of 149 African American women living in the United States and 168 Indian women living in India found that the extent to which women of color in these two places attempt to lighten their skin or straighten their hair is shaped by the degree to which they have internalized White beauty standards (Harper and Choma 2019).

Nevertheless, men also can experience benefits from being light-skinned and having European features. *Grey's Anatomy* star Jesse Williams, for example, explained: "To some people I might be a celebrity because I'm physically attractive. We are programmed to believe that someone is attractive because they told you that blue eyes are hot. I am not going to participate in that shit," he says. "I aim to do what I can with what I have. And I have my [looks]—you know, European beauty standards give me access to things." Williams acknowledges that his blue eyes and light skin grant him unearned privileges, yet he disparages the system that gives him these advantages (Kasperkevic 2015).

Grey's Anatomy star Jesse Williams acknowledges that his blue eyes and light skin grant him privileges.

In India, it continues to be common for people to use advertisements to find spouses, and these advertisements make it clear that fair skin makes women more marriageable. Radhika Parameswaran and Kavitha Cardoza (2009) report that men are much less likely than women to report their own skin color in these advertisements and that men are much more likely to indicate a preference for light skin in a partner. These researchers consistently found ads written by men that sought a "fair" bride and even reported one advertisement by a father who lamented the fact that his daughter's skin was not fair. These preferences have generated a market for skin-lightening creams in India. In 2013, fairness products constituted 45 percent of the cosmetics and toiletries market in India (McDougall 2013). Companies that make these products also use advertising to reinforce the idea that lighter women are more

marriageable. One ad for Fair & Lovely Fairness Cold Cream shows a young woman with a beaming smile. The caption reads: “This winter, I discovered the only cold cream that also made me fairer. (And *he* discovered me)” (Parameswaran and Cardoza 2009). A consistent theme in Indian advertisements for whitening creams is that women who wish to be more beautiful can use these creams to become more fair and thus more desirable, to men.

Transnational corporations have taken advantage of the widespread desire for fair skin around the world and have used it to generate immense profits. Through advertising, large transnational corporations have not only reinforced the idea that light skin is essential for success, but also have profited immensely from selling products that promise to save women from the pain and rejection associated with dark skin. Lynn Thomas (2009) underscores the importance of transnational entanglements for the global preference for lighter skin, as most companies that sell whitening products are transnational. In Indonesia, for example, transnational corporations such as Unilever, L’Oréal, and Shiseido are the main sellers of skin whiteners. And out of all the products in the cosmetics industry, it is skin-whitening products that are the most profitable in Indonesia, which is the fourth most populous country in the world (Saraswati 2012).

VOICES

After #NotFairandLovely: Changing Thought Patterns Instead of Skin Tone

The MuslimARC-launched hashtag #NotFairandLovely recently trended in London. The tweets were heart-breaking. Women shared how they were limited from going outside to play in the sun as children, their struggles to overcome an internalized hatred of a dark skin tone, and subsequent acts of self-shaming and devaluation. Some questioned whether their husband's compliments were genuine and expressed concern over the future lives of their children who may inherit their skin tone. People related stories of children judged from the day they are born by the color of their skin: a light-skinned baby is a joy … and a dark-skinned baby? …

…

I ask that we begin un-training ourselves from using the word "fair" to mean light. No skin tone should ever be considered unfair, nor should we settle for a world in which possession of a certain skin tone brings with it an assessment of strength of character. A "fair" world is a just world.

Namira Islam, executive director of the Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC), argues that by modifying our use of language, we can reshape our thinking on skin color and beauty.

Second, let us remind ourselves and those around us that our words and our thoughts and our actions matter.

For example, if someone lists skin tone as [a] factor in considering whether a person is a good candidate for marriage, ask why the person's skin color is relevant to the discussion. Listen. Follow up. If you cannot end the conversation with a verbal request (i.e., to refrain from making comments valuing one skin tone over another or using skin tone to determine the worth of a person in front of you), do so in your heart. Letting people politely know that you dislike what is being said and that you are uncomfortable with it is an important starting point.

Stop adding value judgments to words in your own vocabulary. Don't use "fair" to refer to light-skinned in your thoughts, your writing, or your speech. Realize that this usage does not reflect an objective truth—this is a construction we maintain. "Fair" does not have to refer to any one particular skin tone. The human body is a

miracle, skin is fascinating, and an individual is beautiful, period. Statements like “beautiful for a …” should be corrected when uttered by others and eliminated from our thinking and speech. Repeat as necessary.

Lastly, realize that this entire discussion is grounded in the use of appearance as a metric of quality. Reject the notion that outward beauty dictates self-worth. Reject the idea that someone’s physical beauty is the outward manifestation of their inward value. Reject the idea that your face, your skin, your hair, and your bone construction bear any connection with your strength of spirit, depth of heart, or beauty of imagination. …

We must retrain our brains to understand that skin tone does not dictate physical beauty, and that physical beauty does not guarantee happiness. Our words should reflect these concepts. Begin within yourself. True happiness comes from valuing the self and valuing others so that we treat ourselves well in order to better the lives of those around us.

Source: Islam 2014.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 6.3: Skin Color, Gender, and Beauty

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Conclusion and Discussion

As we have seen in this chapter, skin-color valuations have been pervasive throughout history and around the world. The preference for Whiteness or lightness can be found in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the United States. There are local variations on these preferences, yet they also have many aspects in common and are closely related to gender and sexuality. Colorism, it turns out, is a manifestation of racism that further splits fractured groups into an internal hierarchy related to color. At the same time, since race is closely tied to identity, there are costs to being perceived as too light or, especially, too White. Examining colorism around the world allows us to perceive both commonalities and differences in terms of racial stratification.

This examination also sheds light on the gendered nature of colorism: the color hierarchy has different meanings for men and women. Although some men use skin-whitening creams or pills, women are much more likely to use these products, which can be dangerous and even fatal. Darker-skinned men may find it more difficult than lighter-skinned men to find romantic partners, but this effect is more pronounced among women. And although physical attractiveness serves as capital for both men and women, patriarchy has created a situation in which women must depend more than men on their physical appearance. To the extent that light skin is viewed as more desirable around the world, this aspect of the human body more heavily influences women's lives than men's.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 6.4: Conclusion and Discussion

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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

6.1 When and how did colorism and skin-color stratification originate?

- Colorism has a long history and many distinct manifestations around the world.

Review

» What is the difference between colorism and skin-color stratification?

» How long has colorism been a factor in the African American community?

» How is skin-color stratification in Brazil related to colonialism?

» What is the history of colorism in Asia and Africa?

Critical Thinking

» Why might it be important to understand whether colorism predates colonialism?

6.2 How does colorism differ across societies?

- Skin-whitening creams, which are evidence of a global color hierarchy, can be found from the United States to Asia to Latin America to Africa.

Review

» What are some indicators of colorism and skin-color

stratification in the United States, Asia, Latin America, and Africa?

Critical Thinking

» What are some distinctions between a desire to be White and a desire to have light skin?

6.3 How does skin color relate to gender and beauty?

- Skin-color stratification and colorism are more prominent for women than men, and this disparity is largely related to beauty norms.

Review

» What is a “beauty queue”?

» How does skin-color privilege vary by racial group?

Critical Thinking

» In what ways is colorism “gendered”?

Talking about Race

How would you respond if a friend or relative implied that you are a better (or worse) person because of your skin color or hair texture? You might first ask for an explanation of what this comment means. Listen to any justification offered, and then use the knowledge you have gained in this chapter to respond accordingly. For example, you can tell them that remarks that devalue dark skin can be harmful, or you can explain the connections between colorism and racism.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 6.5: Check Your Understanding

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

LIST OF KEY TERMS

beauty queue

colorism

diaspora

erotic capital

global color hierarchy

hypodescent

mestizos

mulattos

pardo

patriarchy

pigmentocracy

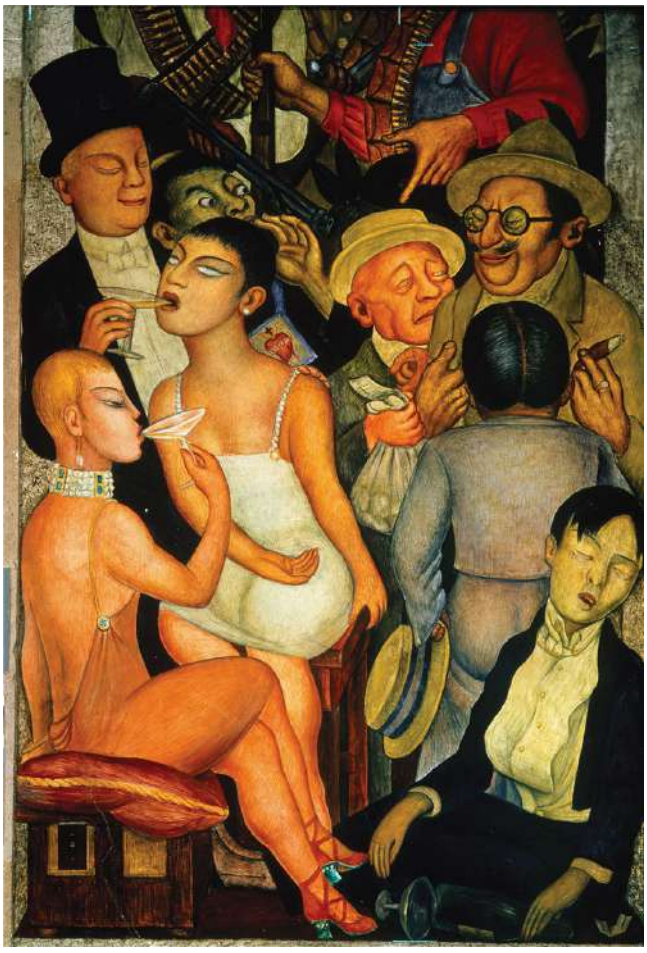
skin-color privilege

skin-color stratification

7

White Privilege and the Changing U.S. Racial Hierarchy

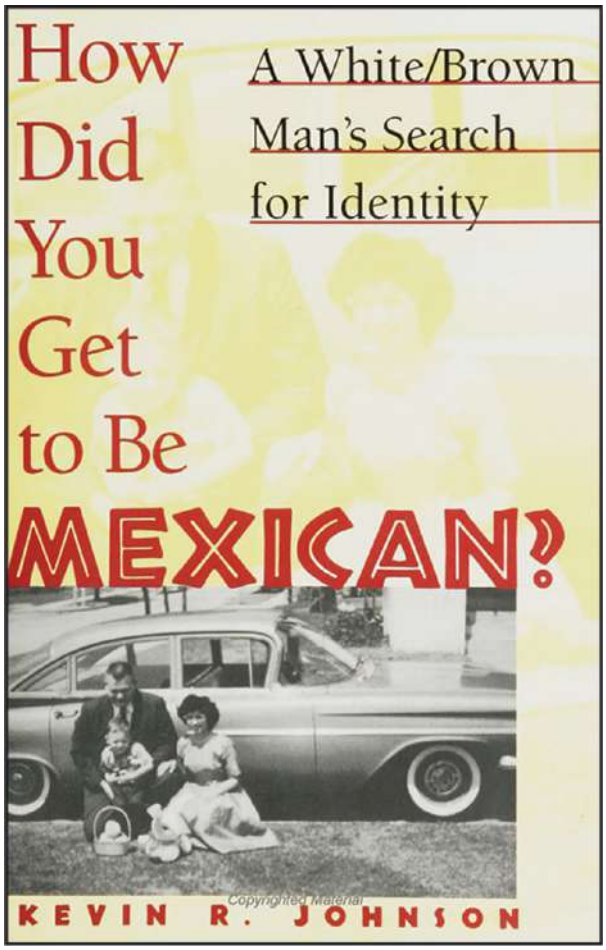
Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced



Orgy-Night of the Rich (detail). Diego Rivera. 1926. Mural. (*Schalkwijk/Art Resource, NY*)

As You Read

- **7.1** What is White privilege, and how does it work?
- **7.2** Does White privilege benefit all White people equally?
- **7.3** Who is White in twenty-first-century America?
- **7.4** How have racial and ethnic classifications changed over time?
- **7.5** Are Latinx people a racial or an ethnic group?



Kevin Johnson, born to a Mexican American mother and an Anglo father, reflects on what it means to be a Mexican American with an Anglo surname. His reflections point to the salience of racial lines, racial identities, and racial discourses in the United States.

My mother is Mexican American and my father is Anglo. They met and married young in Los Angeles, where I was born in 1958. Their story is unremarkable. Intermarriage between Anglos and Mexican Americans has occurred for centuries in the Southwest. For much of childhood and youth, I paid little attention to my mixed heritage.

Though I did not think much about it at the time, I have classified myself as Mexican American since adolescence. My eyes are brown and my hair dark brown, almost black. I am more comfortable in Mexican American than in Anglo culture. Over the years, the contrast between my name and

self-identification has often been a source of curiosity to others and of occasional discomfort to me. The burning question always seems to be, “Am I a Latino?” This seemingly simple, straightforward question raises complex issues that go to the core of race relations in the modern United States. This book offers a glimpse into my life in the borderlands between Anglo and Mexican worlds.

My mother-in-law, Mary Helen Salazar, a Mexican American from Los Angeles, was visiting our new house in Davis. We were sitting in the family room watching the television news. The program cut to a story about racism in the South. Listening intently, Mary Helen observed, “I would never survive there.” I responded without thinking, “The real division there is between Black people and White people,” to which she quickly replied, “Well, *you* don’t have a Spanish surname.”

In the spring of 1996, I was sitting in a bar off Pacific Coast Highway in Manhattan Beach, California, a white, upper-middle-class suburb of Los Angeles. Funeral services for my father’s uncle, my great-uncle Kennard Johnson (known as “Brown-eyes” or “Brownie” to distinguish him from his blue-eyed twin), had just ended. I had time to kill with my father and step-brother while I waited for my return flight to Sacramento, and we were exchanging memories of Brown-eyes over a few beers. What a funny guy, I mused. “Remember on the way to Yosemite that year when he pulled up his car next to ours and, for a laugh, pulled out his fake teeth?” But he sure was a worrier, which was no wonder given a lifetime of economic insecurity. He always worked hard at the bakery, where he was employed for as long as I can remember, but money must have been tight. I wondered what it had been like when he married Rosie and became one of the first in his family to marry a Mexican American woman. They had grown up together in a working-

class neighborhood near downtown Los Angeles where Mexican Americans and Anglos lived side by side, and had spent fifty years there before moving to the desert to retire.

While I sat there thinking about Brown-eyes, a tall fellow sitting on the barstool next to us was rambling on to anyone who would listen about a recent trip to Texas, interspersing his banter with a series of bad jokes. In retrospect, what happened next seemed inevitable. I turned in just in time to hear him ask, "How do you make sure nobody steals the stereo speakers in your car? You put a sign on them saying '*no habla español.'* "Nobody laughed. I wondered why I had to listen to this crap. Why couldn't I drink my beer and grieve without dealing with jokes that cut painfully to the core of my identity? Like a boxer in the late rounds of a fight or a weary runner near the end of a marathon, I was too tired from the travails of the long day—seeing mourning family, reliving the sad and happy memories, pondering my own mortality—to lash back at this insensitive Texan wannabe. "Please give me another," I asked the barmaid and emptied my glass.

The guy got me thinking. On the flight back to Sacramento, I thought of the Spanish speakers I knew and found that I could not think of one who might steal a car stereo. I wondered what it would be like for my identity to be "transparent," a non-issue in my daily life, the way it is for many Anglos.

These stories show how a few words may hurt and marginalize. They also demonstrate the limits of assimilation for Latinos, even half-white ones like myself.

Source: Johnson 1999.

Racial identities are important in the United States because race is personally and materially important in our lives. In the excerpt above, Kevin Johnson wonders aloud what it might be like to be unambiguously White and thus to not have to think about race all the time. Not having to

think about race is one example of White privilege, the other side of racial oppression. Whereas people of color face disadvantages because of racism, White people experience privilege.

White people in the United States do not all share in this privilege equally —wealthy White people benefit from Whiteness in ways that working-class White people do not, for example. However, it can be useful to look critically at Whiteness in the same ways that we examine Blackness, Asian-ness, indigeneity, or *latinidad*. Because Whiteness is the unmarked norm in U.S. society, it can be easy to overlook it and talk about race without talking about what it means to be White. In this chapter, we will explore Whiteness by considering who is White, the privileges of Whiteness, the boundaries of Whiteness, and the past and future of racial categories in the United States.

Although there are undeniable privileges associated with being White, as we saw in the last chapter, people are attached to their non-White identities, and it is not the case that all non-White people would like to be White. Why wouldn't (or couldn't) everyone gain access to White privilege? What does Whiteness signify in the United States today? Who is White and who is not? Where are the boundaries of Whiteness? How and why has the significance of Whiteness changed over time?

White Privilege

What is White privilege, and how does it work? **White privilege** refers to the advantages inherent in being categorized as White. The concept derives from earlier work by African American sociologist W. E. B. DuBois (1868–1963), who observed that White workers in the United States came to see themselves as White like their bosses, as opposed to developing working-class solidarity with recently freed Black slaves. DuBois argued in 1936 that White workers received a psychological "**wage of whiteness**" by aligning with the dominant group; they were poor, but at least they were White. Additionally, by reserving certain segments of the labor market for White people only, White laborers were able to reap material rewards from their Whiteness. Other scholars, mostly historians, have built on DuBois's insights to explain how waves of European immigrants learned to be White and to reap the privileges of Whiteness (Allen 1994; Jacobson 1998; Roediger 1999).

As noted in Chapter Two, European immigrants who arrived in the United States in the early twentieth century did not think of themselves as White prior to their arrival. And, in some cases, people in the United States did not see them as White. Irish immigrants learned to capitalize on their Whiteness by forming unions and excluding Black people from them. And although Jewish people faced discrimination during and after World War II, as White people, they were able to reap the benefits of the GI bills and Federal Housing Administration and Department of Veterans Affairs mortgages that were denied to Black people, which propelled many White people into the middle class (Brodkin 2005). Whereas these European immigrants had to learn to be White, most White people today never have to think about Whiteness.

In the contemporary United States, Whiteness is an unmarked identity. Whereas Black and Latinx people, Asians, and Native Americans are constantly reminded of their race, White people easily can forget that they too have a race (Dalton 2005). When we talk about race (or, more recently, diversity), the focus is usually on non-White people, as if White were not also a race (Lewis 2004). When we think of race in the United States, Whiteness usually is not the first thing that comes to mind. The reason is that Whiteness has become normalized—"whiteness makes itself invisible precisely by asserting its normalcy" (Frankenberg 1997, 6).

Privilege is often hard to notice. If you are White, it can be difficult to notice you are not being followed around the store; people are smiling at you on the street instead of clutching their purses; no one asks you if you speak English; you are not asked for identification when paying with a credit card. Instead, you are likely to think these things are normal—that this is simply how things are. To notice these privileges as a White person, you likely would have to walk down the street with an African American friend or accompany a Latinx friend to get a driver's license. Then, you may notice a difference in terms of how White people respond to you and your non-White friend. Few White people notice they are treated better than people of color, and most are unlikely to attribute that better treatment to privilege. Privilege is largely invisible to those who have it.

Chapter 7.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

White privilege may be invisible but is highly consequential. For example, in 2015, a White Stanford student named Brock Allen Turner was found sexually assaulting an unconscious, semi-naked woman behind a dumpster. She was taken to the hospital, where a nurse noted that significant trauma had been inflicted on the victim's genitalia. When the case went to trial, the jury found Turner guilty on three felony counts, and

the prosecution argued he should get a six-year sentence. However, Judge Aaron Persky was hesitant to punish Turner this severely and gave him six months in county jail instead. The judge explained: "A prison sentence would have a severe impact on him." *Huffington Post* writer Alanna Vagianos wrote in response: "Turner's lenient punishment is the perfect example of what happens when rape culture and white privilege collide." By *rape culture*, Vagianos is referring to the normalization of sexual abuse of women in our society. Because of Turner's Whiteness and class privilege, the judge had sympathy for him. Turner was held in protective custody and ultimately spent only three months behind bars (Vagianos 2016).

The case of Brock Turner, as well as many other cases of White privilege, makes it clear that White privilege doesn't simply exist—it is enacted. The judge gave Turner a light sentence because he did not believe Turner to be a dangerous man despite his harmful actions. When shopkeepers are not suspicious of White shoppers, the White shopper is the beneficiary of the privilege, but only because the shopkeeper has accepted the racist idea that White people are less likely to shoplift. White privilege, then, is related to White supremacy: White privilege exists because of past and current practices that reproduce racism.

The case of Brock Turner showed how White privilege is enacted.

RESEARCH FOCUS

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

Peggy McIntosh (2005) famously described White privilege as an "invisible knapsack." She explains: "White privilege is like an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious" (109). McIntosh then explains what is included in the contents of this invisible knapsack. Here are some of the items:

- I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
- I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
- Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
- I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
- I can swear, or dress in secondhand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
- I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
- I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group
- I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin. (McIntosh 1989, 10–12)

McIntosh explains that these privileges amount to "unearned advantages" that are consistently generated by her skin color.

Retailers often racially profile and treat White customers better than non-White customers.

Flesh colored crayons.

For Discussion

1. Do all White people experience these forms of White privilege?
2. What other forms of White privilege can you think of?
3. How are other forms of privilege, such as male privilege or class privilege, related to White privilege?
4. Can non-White people have access to White privilege?
5. Is White privilege a useful concept for thinking about racial inequality in the United States? Why or why not?

Source: McIntosh 2005.

Why would White people ever be inclined to end White privilege? Moral arguments can be made about the ethics of accepting unearned benefits, but it is especially hard for anyone to not be desirous of passing down benefits (meritorious or not) to their children. Everyone wants the best for their children, so there are limits to the utility of moral arguments.

We can also ask, however, whether racism can be harmful to White people even though White privilege exists. In *Whiteness: The Power of Privilege*, the antiracist activist and writer Tim Wise contends "the price we pay to stay one step ahead of others is enormous" (2005, 120). The vast majority of working people could earn higher wages and have better benefits if White and non-White people worked together to demand them as a common goal. White people are less likely to go to prison than Black or Latinx people, yet the enormous amount of resources the United States invests in the prison-industrial complex are resources that don't go into better schools, parks, libraries, and universities—which could benefit everyone. For these reasons, W. E. B. DuBois and others have referred to the "psychological wage of whiteness": racism makes all White people *think* they are getting a better deal, but the reality is that racism affects all of us, albeit in different ways. DuBois argued that the psychological wage of Whiteness drives a wedge between White and Black laborers, who otherwise share an interest in working together to fight for better material conditions.

It is important to consider White privilege for several reasons. First of all, if we want to understand racial oppression, it is crucial to understand how it looks from the other side. Second, White privilege often remains invisible, and by bringing it to light we can develop a better understanding of how racism works in our society.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.1: White Privilege

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Whiteness, Class, Gender, and Sexuality

An important point to keep in mind when thinking about White privilege is that although it certainly benefits some White people, all White people do not experience White privilege in the same way. When an employer gives a White applicant the benefit of the doubt because he is White, the applicant experiences White privilege, whether or not he is aware of it. However, a poor lesbian White woman in rural South Carolina, for example, will experience her Whiteness—and her White privilege—in different ways than a wealthy White heterosexual male stockbroker in New York. The White stockbroker will have doors opened to him that will remain shut to a poor woman of any race.

White privilege can be hard to see, particularly for poor White people who do not have class privilege (Moss 2003). Poor White people can experience a contradiction in their identities—White people are not supposed to be poor, yet they are. Kirby Moss (2003) found that poor White people found it difficult to see how they were benefiting from their Whiteness, as their poverty presented obstacles to enjoying the privileges of Whiteness. Although they were White, they did not have the "set of cultural practices" (Frankenberg 1993, 43) associated with Whiteness because of their class background.

Although poor White people do not have access to the same resources as middle-class White people, other studies have found that they still find status in the psychological wages of Whiteness discussed by W. E. B. DuBois. In a study of White adults in a town in rural Maine that is 98 percent White, Claudine Pied (2019) found that poor and working-class White residents drew on raced and classed ideologies to position themselves as hardworking and deserving people who were struggling

financially due to economic decline—not to personal failings. She explains: “By claiming the status of a white hard worker, poor and working-class White people can align themselves with the industrious American who faces tough times but picks him- or herself back up and keeps going” (2019, 41). In this way, low-income white Mainers both distinguish themselves from the “undeserving poor” who are imagined as people of color as well as less well-off residents they label as “White trash” – even when they rely on government assistance themselves. These White Mainers drew upon the concept of a hardworking White worker to describe themselves and their position in the local economy. This positive self-conception is based in part on the psychological wages of Whiteness —similar to the White immigrants studied by W. E. B. DuBois decades earlier.

Past and present-day practices of individual and institutional racism have created segregated neighborhoods in the United States. White people’s privileged access to primarily White neighborhoods is part of White privilege. The other side of this coin is that working-class and poor White people cannot always afford to live in middle-class White neighborhoods and thus are sometimes unable to reap this particular benefit of Whiteness. As Kirby Moss (2003) notes, poor White people sometimes live in primarily non-White neighborhoods because that is where they can afford to live. Living in those neighborhoods, poor White people encounter many of the same challenges that their non-White neighbors encounter, such as crime, violence, and lack of access to resources.

White privilege does not always work in the same way for working-class and poor White people as it does for wealthier White people. It is important to note, however, that most poor White people live in primarily White neighborhoods, just as most poor Black people live in primarily Black neighborhoods (Bischoff and Reardon 2014). A White man who enters a primarily Black neighborhood may be made aware of his Whiteness once he finds himself surrounded by Black people and receiving stares (or even glares) from residents who want to know why a White person is in their neighborhood. In the narrow space of a primarily

Black neighborhood, a White person may not feel she is experiencing White privilege. However, a middle-class White man often can live his whole life without ever having to enter a space where his Whiteness will present a challenge. He can avoid primarily Black neighborhoods because there is no reason for him to ever go there. In contrast, a Black man may need to go to a White neighborhood because that is where his job is located, or he even may be desirous of moving into such a neighborhood because that is where the good schools are. A Black man may encounter problems with law enforcement or neighborhood watch associations if he walks around a middle-class White neighborhood.

Just as Whiteness is linked to class, it is also defined by gender and sexuality. White womanhood has historically been linked to sexual virtuosity, and for White women, White privilege can hinge on maintaining an appearance of sexual respectability (Wilkins 2004). Ideas of Whiteness are intertwined with ideas of gender, sexuality, and White womanhood. Catrin Lundström's (2014) work with American men married to Swedish women makes this clear. Lundström found that the American husbands placed tremendous value on their wives' Swedish heritage. These American men viewed Swedish women as representing an ideal form of Whiteness that encompasses White purity, beauty, and sensuality. Lundstrom's work adds nuance to sociological understandings of Whiteness, as it allows us to see that there are degrees of Whiteness in the United States and that some forms of Whiteness are more valuable than others.

VOICES

Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person

I came from the kind of poor that people don't want to believe still exists in this country. Have you ever spent a frigid northern-Illinois winter without heat or running water? I have. At 12 years old were you making ramen noodles in a coffee maker with water you fetched from a public bathroom? I was. Have you ever lived in a camper year-round and used a random relative's apartment as your mailing address? We did. Did you attend so many different elementary schools that you can only remember a quarter of their names? Welcome to my childhood.

The concept of intersectionality recognizes that people can be privileged in some ways and not privileged in others.

So when a feminist told me I had "white privilege," I told her that my white skin didn't do shit to prevent me from experiencing poverty. …

It is absolutely a freak anomaly that I'm in graduate school, considering that not one person on either side of my family has a college degree. And it took me until my 30s to ever believe that someone from my stock could achieve such a thing. Poverty colors nearly everything about your perspective on opportunities for advancement in life. Middle-class, educated people assume that anyone can achieve their goals if they work hard enough. Folks steeped in poverty rarely see a life past working at the gas station, making the rent on their trailer, and self-medicating with cigarettes and prescription drugs until they die of a heart attack. (I've just described one whole side of my family and the life I assumed I'd be living before I lucked out of it.) I, maybe more than most people, can completely understand why broke white folks get pissed when the word "privilege" is thrown around. As a child I was constantly discriminated against because of my poverty, and those wounds still run very deep.

But luckily my college education introduced me to a more nuanced concept of privilege: the term "intersectionality." The concept of intersectionality recognizes that people can be privileged in some ways and definitely not privileged in others. There are many different types of privilege, not just skin-color privilege, that impact the way people can move through the world or are discriminated against. These are all things you are born into, not things you earned, that afford you opportunities that others may not have. For example:

Citizenship: Simply being born in this country affords you certain privileges that non-citizens will never access.

Class: Being born into a financially stable family can help guarantee your health, happiness, safety, education, intelligence, and future opportunities.

Sexual orientation: If you were born straight, every state in this country affords you privileges that non-straight folks have to fight the Supreme Court for.

Sex: If you were born male, you can assume that you can walk through a parking garage without worrying that you'll be raped and then have to deal with a defense attorney blaming it on what you were wearing.

Ability: If you were born able-bodied, you probably don't have to plan your life around handicap access, braille, or other special needs.

Gender identity: If you were born cisgender (that is, your gender identity matches the sex you were assigned at birth), you don't have to worry that using the restroom or locker room will invoke public outrage.

As you can see, belonging to one or more category of privilege, especially being a straight, white, middle-class, able-bodied male, can be like winning a lottery you didn't even know you were playing. But this is not to imply that any form of privilege is exactly the same as another, or that people lacking in one area of privilege understand what it's like to be lacking in other areas. Race discrimination is not equal to sex discrimination and so forth.

And listen: Recognizing privilege doesn't mean suffering guilt or shame for your lot in life. Nobody's saying that straight, white, middle-class, able-bodied males are all a bunch of assholes who don't work hard for what they have. Recognizing privilege simply means being aware that some people have to work much harder just to experience the things you take for granted (if they ever can experience them at all).

I know now that I *am* privileged in many ways. I am privileged as a natural-born white citizen. I am privileged as a cisgender woman. I am privileged as an able-bodied person. I am privileged that my first language is also our national language, and that I was born with an intellect and ambition that pulled me out of the poverty that I was otherwise destined for. I was privileged to be able to marry my way "up" by partnering with a privileged, middle-class, educated male who fully expected me to earn a college degree.

There are a million ways I experience privilege, and some that I certainly don't. But thankfully, intersectionality allows us to examine these varying dimensions and degrees of discrimination while raising awareness of the results of multiple systems of oppression at work.

Tell me: Are you a white person who's felt uncomfortable with the term "white privilege"? Does a more nuanced approach help you see your own privilege more clearly?

Source: Crosley-Corcoran 2014.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.2: Whiteness, Class, Gender, and Sexuality

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Whiteness and Racial Categories in Twenty-First-Century America

Who is White in twenty-first-century America? As we saw in Chapter Two, the boundaries of Whiteness have been blurry for a long time. What about today? Do controversies still exist about who is White?

One place to which we can look for an understanding of who is White in America today is the U.S. Census Bureau, the governmental body responsible for counting people in the United States and enumerating the demographic aspects of the U.S. population. It is useful to take a close look at the census categories, as official classifications both reflect and reinforce social categories.

To collect data on racial classification, the Census Bureau must provide definitions of each racial group. According to the 2020 definition, "The category 'White' includes all individuals who identify with one or more nationalities or ethnic groups originating in Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. Examples of groups include, but are not limited to, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Polish, French, Iranian, Slavic, Cajun, and Chaldean." This definition makes it clear that Middle Easterners are "White" in the United States, even if they may not consider themselves to be White. And what about Latinx people? Many have origins in Spain, meaning they would qualify as "White" under this definition, as Spain is in Europe. Notably, this definition does not say that a person must have origins exclusively in Europe. Census categories and definitions, however, are not the end of the story; moreover, they change over time.

Racial boundaries are constantly in flux in terms of both their meanings and their limits. For example, what it means to be an Afghani in the

United States changed in the aftermath of September 11 and the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. Being Japanese American today means something very distinct from being Japanese American during World War II. Some groups have moved closer to Whiteness, whereas others have moved further away. Let's consider how and why racial boundaries have changed and what these changes mean for the U.S. racial hierarchy. Even though (and perhaps because) Whiteness is an important aspect of many people's reality, it is not always clear who is White. Moreover, the boundaries surrounding Whiteness continue to be contested. Definitions of who is White vary across time and space because "White" is a racialized group, a group that is actively created and reinforced in daily interactions and practices (Small 1999).

Latinx People and the Multiracial Hierarchy

Are Latinx people White? Some scholars argue that Latinx people are a "racialized other" and thus are all non-White (Itzigsohn and Dore Cabral 2001). Others contend that some Latinx people are White (Rodríguez 2000). In the 2010 census, 16.3 percent of respondents reported that they were Hispanic or Latinx. Among Hispanics, 53 percent identified their race as White; 2.5 percent as Black; 1.4 percent as American Indian; 36.7 percent as other; and 6 percent as two or more races (Figure 7-1).

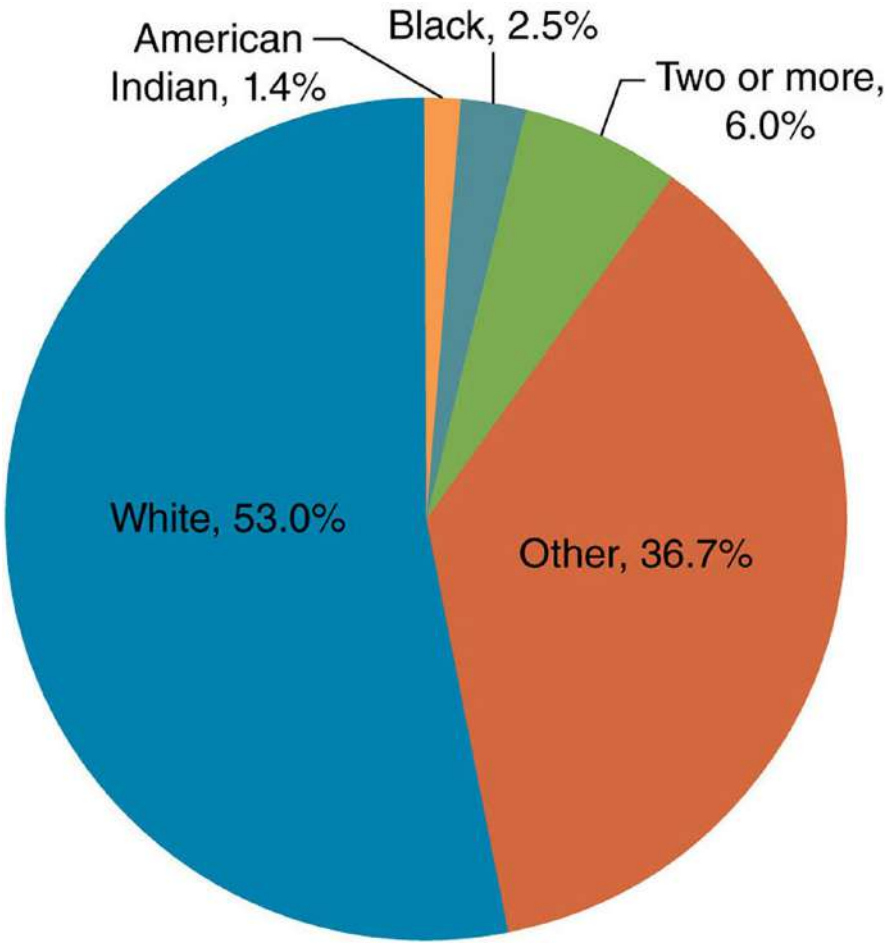


FIGURE 7-1 Latinx Racial Identifications in the U.S. Census Over half of all Latinxs self-identified as "White." Source: Humes, Karen, Nicholas A. Jones, and Roberto R. Ramirez (2010).

More than half of Latinx people identified their race as White in the 2010 census. What are the implications of this identification? Can you be a White Latinx? Or are all Latinos and Latinas people of color? Sociologist Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (2007) explores the idea of being a White Puerto Rican, or what he refers to as a "**white person of color**": a person who appears to be White yet identifies with a non-White group. This phrase appears contradictory, as "person of color" seems to be synonymous with "non-White." In response, Vidal-Ortiz argues that **racialization**, the process by which a group begins to be treated as a race, "unifies Puerto Ricans' racial experiences in the U.S., while skin color still operates as a distinct marker of access and treatment" (2007, 181). In short, White Puerto Ricans experience privilege due to their White skin yet are still

treated as people of color. This happens particularly when their Puerto Rican-ness becomes evident through either their Spanish accent, their Spanish surname, or another marker that identifies them as Puerto Rican, such as their clothing or mannerisms. Elizabeth Aranda and Guillermo Rebollo-Gil (2004) found that White Puerto Ricans experience racism because of cultural markers such as language and demeanor.

Some Latinx people are physically indistinguishable from White people and thus reap many of the benefits of White-skin privilege. However, not all Latinx people who describe themselves as White have very light skin. For example, in the 1989 Latino National Political Survey, 32 percent of respondents with "very dark" skin identified as White, as did 36 percent of those with dark skin and 54 percent of those with medium skin. In that survey, light-skinned Latinx people were the most likely to identify as White, yet many dark-skinned Latinx people also did (Golash-Boza and Darity 2008). What does it mean when a dark-skinned Latinx identifies as White? Does saying you are White make you White?

In a more recent study, Nicholas Vargas (2015) found that although 40 percent of Latinx people self-identified as White, only 6 percent reported being classified as White by others. Moreover, they found that Latinx people with light skin and of higher class status were more likely to be identified by others as White. Notably, many Latinx people who are identified as White by others do not self-identify as White (Figure 7-2).

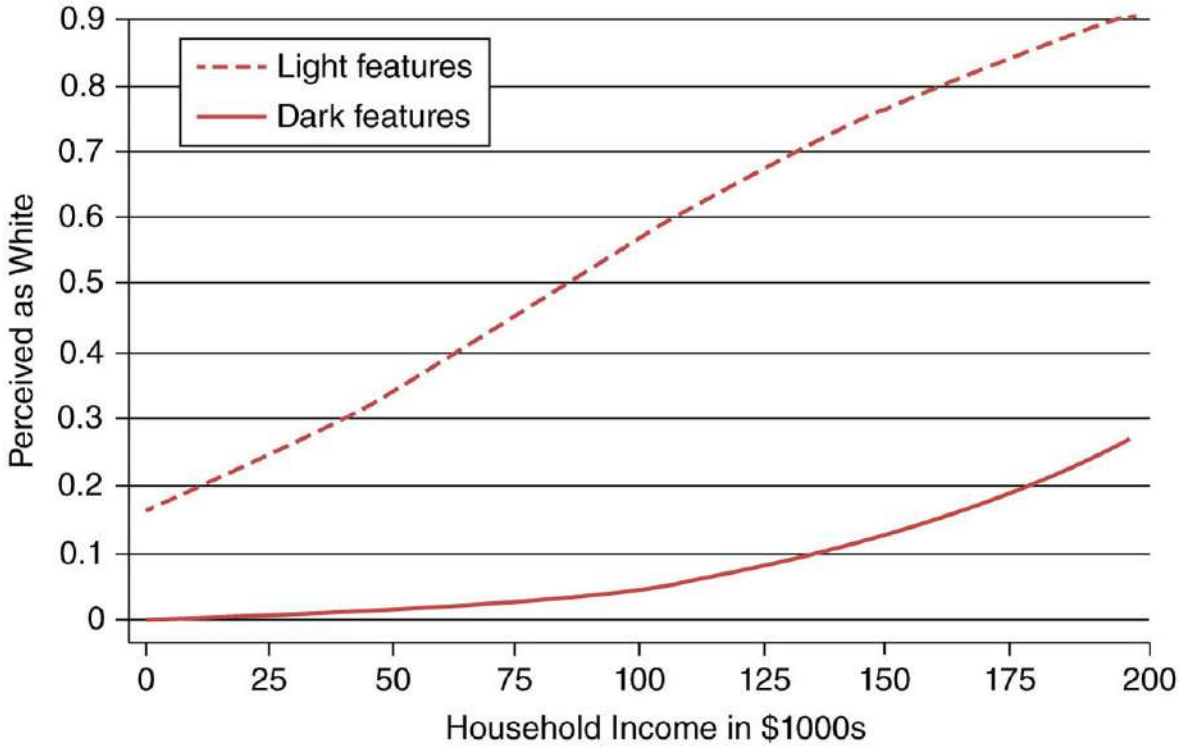


FIGURE 7-2 Probability of External Classification as White by Phenotype and Household Income among Latinxs Source: Vargas (2015).

Part of the reason for the lack of concurrence between skin color and racial identification is that many Latinx people do not identify with U.S. racial categories (Rodríguez 2000). In 2010, 18.5 million Hispanics marked their race on the U.S. census as "other," whereas only 600,000 non-Hispanics chose this designation. The fact that Hispanics made up 97 percent of those classified as "some other race" indicates that Hispanics are the most likely to see themselves as outside of the U.S. racial hierarchy—that is, as having a racial identity that does not fit neatly into the U.S. system of racial classification. And because of the ways Latinx people are racialized in the United States, few Latins see themselves as unproblematically White. Notably, even Spaniards, who are from Europe, find that their Whiteness can be contested due to their surname, accent, and Spanish-language ability (Soto Márquez 2019). Hispanic and Latinx people's Whiteness is always open to contestation.

The Place of Arab Americans, North Africans, and Middle Easterners in the U.S. Racial Hierarchy

North Africans and Middle Easterners were given the official designation of "White" on the U.S. census, in part because these groups lobbied to be defined as such in the early twentieth century. At the time, Whiteness gave people in the United States access to citizenship rights denied to non-White people (Haney-Lopez 2006). Many North Africans, however, do not view themselves as White. Mostafa Hefny (pictured at bottom, right) is one example. Hefny was born in Egypt and came to the United States in 1978. When he arrived in the United States, he was classified as White because of his origins in Egypt, which is in North Africa. Hefny, who considers himself a Nubian and an African, has been trying to get his racial classification changed to Black ever since. Thus far, he has been unsuccessful (J. S. Smith 2012; Hefny 2017). What about other North Africans or Middle Easterners? Do they see themselves as White?

A study of Lebanese immigrants in Michigan found that Lebanese Shi'a Muslims readily embraced a White identity. These Lebanese immigrants enjoyed the privilege of being White and thus having an unmarked identity unless they chose to wear a *hijab*. Sociologists Kristine Ajrouch and Abdi Kusow (2007) describe a Lebanese woman who had cordial relations with her neighbor until she decided to cover her head. Once she began to wear a hijab, her neighbors' behavior toward her changed. Her display of religious identity threatened her standing as an unmarked White person.

In 2003, researchers in Michigan conducted a survey of Arab Americans in the Detroit area, home to the largest concentration of Arab Americans in the United States. In this survey of over 1,000 Arab Americans, 57 percent identified themselves as Christian and 41 percent identified themselves as Muslim. About three-quarters had finished high school. Most were Lebanese or Syrian (43 percent) or Iraqi (30 percent). About

70 percent responded “yes” when asked if “Arab American” described them. As for race, about two-thirds identified their race as “white,” and another third as “other” (Baker et al. 2003). Not surprisingly, Arab Americans who were Christian were more likely to identify as White (Ajrouch and Jamal 2007). These studies show that most, but not all, Arab Americans identify as White, but that being White is not always consistent with a Muslim religious identity.

Although the United States is a secular nation, the presumption is that Christianity is the norm. People with other religious faiths can be subject to exclusion on this basis. And although not all White people are Christians, there is an assumption that Whiteness is linked to Christianity. When we learn that someone is not Christian, his or her Whiteness can be put into question.

Chapter 7.2 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

For over three decades, Americans of Middle Eastern or North African descent have lobbied for a census category that reflects their experiences. In 2017, the Office of Management and Budget (which decides on census classifications) considered the addition of such a category for the 2020 census. “Middle Eastern and North African” will include people with origins in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, or Yemen, as well as those who identify as Amazigh or Berber, Arab, Assyrian, Bedouin, Chaldean, Copt, Druze, Kurdish, or Syriac. Other groups, such as Turks, Sudanese, Somalis, Afghans, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Cypriots, Djiboutians, Georgians, Mauritanians, South Sudanese, and Turkish Cypriots, also lobbied to be included in this definition.

A potential downside of this change in the U.S. census is that it could emphasize the racialization of American Middle Easterners and North Africans. In particular, the conflation of Middle Easterners with terrorism has led to widespread discrimination. For example, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015, the governors of thirty U.S. states announced their refusal to accept Syrian refugees (Seipel 2015). This policy is discrimination on the basis of national origin, which U.S. law prohibits. Although closely related, discrimination on the basis of national origin is distinct from racial discrimination. However, this discrimination against Syrians, as well as Muslims and Middle Easterners more generally, may suggest that these groups are being racialized as not White.

After a long period of debate, in 2017, the U.S. Census Bureau formally recommended to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that the 2020 census make two changes to the race question: (1) reassign Hispanic/Latino/Spanish to a racial category, and (2) include a new race category for people identifying as Middle East and North African. The OMB did not respond to this request by December 31, 2017, and the Census Bureau was therefore not able to make these changes to the 2020 Census.

VOICES

Arab American—AKA White without the Privilege

On August 12, 2016, thirty-seven-year-old Khalid Jabara was shot and killed on his front porch. Stanley Vernon Majors, a sixty-one-year-old White man and Jabara's next door neighbor, was charged with murder and hate crimes as police say he shot Jabara. As of this writing, the trial is still pending. Writer Mirna Zaher reflects on what this incident means for Arab Americans.

This is not an article I wanted to write. It's not something easy to write. But something has changed within the past few days. That something has a name, and it's Khalid Jabara. Khalid, a Lebanese Christian Arab was murdered by his neighbor after years of racism, and attempted harm. I didn't write this as a way to vent hatred, but as a way to express the frustration all American Arabs (Christian, Jew, and Muslim) know to be true, that legally we may be considered white, but we sure as hell don't have any of the privilege. His death hit me hard. This could have been me, it could have been my sister, or my brother, it could have been so many more people I care about, and that thought paralyzed me.

Growing up as an Arab in a post-9/11 America was not exactly the walk in the park you would expect it to be. People were racist, more often than not. I remember the first time someone called me a terrorist, I remember not standing up for the other Middle Eastern kid in my class because I was afraid they would turn on me too. I remember watching my mom come home in tears because her manager had spit on her and told her "go back to your country." I remember so much, and this … this makes me understand just how lucky I was to only get insults and hurt feelings. The racism shown to my family has gotten significantly better as the years progress, but once Donald Trump based his campaign on racist propaganda and slander, we once again became the enemy. I grew up being told that it was not okay for me to be proud of where I come from, that I

was to put my race on the census, and legal forms as white, that I was not an Arab American, but rather a white American. But if I'm white then tell me this, how many times does a white person get searched at an airport, how many times did your father consider changing your last name to its English translation, how many times have you had to brush off a racist joke that stung like a bee. My name, my face, my personality, everything about me screams that I am a fraud living in this white category you placed me in. Not only do Arab Americans get treated as less than most other racial groups of Americans, but our cultural rights and identification amongst each other are being taken away too.

Khalid Jabara was just another example of this. He would still be alive if he were white, oh wait he was, but no one saw him as white. His death hurts because he looks so much like my family members, his life is so similar to mine. This makes me understand better, what it is that the Black Lives Matter Movement is fighting for, the only difference is that when an African American dies due to police negligence the media will talk about it for weeks, by tomorrow the name Khalid Jabara will probably be nowhere to be found in relation to media stations, because it isn't just that we Arabs are white without the privilege, but that our lives simply don't matter. We don't matter. I don't matter…. Khalid Jabara's death may be kicked out of focus in the following days, but I promise I will never forget. I will never stop fighting for his life to mean something, because it means something to me. From one Christian Arab to another, May you find peace brother, and may your family find the justice you deserve.

Source: Zaher 2016.

RESEARCH FOCUS

The Limits of Whiteness

Neda Maghbouleh's 2017 book, *The Limits of Whiteness: Iranian Americans and the Everyday Politics of Race*, begins with a chapter called "Being White" and ends with a chapter titled "Being Brown." These two chapters cover the paradox Iranians face—they are legally classified as White yet are socially treated as non-White. Maghbouleh describes Iranians as "legally white but socially brown" (45).

Drawing from historical research as well as interviews with Iranian youth and their parents, Neda Magbouleh artfully explains how Iranian Americans came to be categorized as white *de jure* in the early twentieth century and the extent to which they are socially incorporated as white *de facto* today.

In the early twentieth century, as various groups were attempting to be legally defined as White in the racial prerequisite cases, they often used Iranians as a reference group in their claims-making efforts. When Syrians wanted to be coded as White, they claimed Iranians were White, so thus they were too. When Armenians wanted to be classified as White, they claimed they were Whiter than Iranians—thereby positioning Iranians as non-White. In later cases, Indians and Syrians positioned Iranians as White or non-White in order to make their own claims to Whiteness. Maghbouleh argues that Iranians were "racial hinges" on which "claims to whiteness swung" (17)—referring to the ways other groups hinge their claims to Whiteness on Iranians relative position in the racial hierarchy.

As we fast forward to today, Iranians in the United States experience discrimination, harassment, violence, and stigmatization. These experiences are more similar to immigrants of color than they are to White immigrants. This points to another issue which Maghbouleh calls "racial loopholes" as Iranians are legally classified

as White and thus cannot claim racial discrimination. If a White person shouts a racial slur at an Iranian, they can't sue for racial discrimination because Iranians are legally White.

Another paradox is that Iranians have relatively high rates of educational attainment and high incomes compared to other non-White immigrants. In addition, many Iranian immigrants perceive themselves as White. This creates tensions between the children of Iranians who are often policed, surveilled, and harassed, and their parents, who see themselves not just as White, but as Aryan. Whereas traditional theories of immigration posit that the children of White immigrants will become Whiter and more American over time, Iranian children growing up in the United States become more attached to a "Brown" identity as their experiences in school and other social settings lead them to believe they are not White.

Multiracial Identification and the U.S. Racial Hierarchy

What about **multiracials**, people whose parents identify with different racial groups? Are they White? Or does the one-drop rule persist in our society? Three percent of all respondents in the 2010 U.S. census identified with more than one race. Among these respondents, the largest group—accounting for 20 percent of all multiracials—identified as both White and Black. They were followed closely by those who identified as White and some other race (19 percent), White and Asian (18 percent), and White/American Indian (16 percent). When we look at within-group differences, it is remarkable to note that nearly half of all Native Americans reported more than one race, making this group the most likely to identify with more than one race.

Since the introduction of the option to choose more than one race on the U.S. census in 2000, a host of sociological studies have been launched

designed to understand the meanings behind multiracial identifications. Just looking at the numbers from the most recent U.S. census, it is hard to discern what they mean. Do people identify with more than one race because they have one parent who is one race and another who is of a different race? Or is it because they see themselves as having a multiracial heritage, with ancestry from more than one group? What factors influence people's decision to identify with more than one race?

The majority of African Americans in the United States have White and/or Native American ancestry, yet most identify as Black people, not as multiracials. Although Native Americans are the most likely to identify as multiracials, many Native Americans with White or Black ancestry identify as Native Americans and not as multiracials. The reason is that in U.S. society, *multiracial* usually refers to a person with two parents of different races. Even then, not everyone adopts the label.

Today, about 13 percent of marriages in the United States involve persons of different races. Native Americans, Latinx people, and Asians are the most likely to intermarry, and Black and White people are the least likely (Lee and Bean 2004). When these couples have children, some of them may identify as multiracial, and some may not. Kerry Ann Rockquemore and Patricia Arend (2002) studied a broad sample of people with one White parent and one Black parent and found that 61 percent identified as biracial, 13 percent as Black, and 4 percent as White, with the remainder reporting themselves as having situational or no racial identities. Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) argue that these identities are influenced by physical appearance, socioeconomic status, and social networks.

Wendy Roth (2005) took a close look at 2000 census data and found quite a bit of variability in multiracial identifications. Roth looked at a subsample of children who had one White parent and one non-White parent and parsed out how these parents identified their children. She found that 53 percent of children who had one Black parent and one White parent were identified by their parents as both Black and White on

the 2000 census, while 11 percent were identified as White and 25 percent as Black. Remarkably, 25 percent of children with one White parent and one Asian or Pacific Islander parent were designated as White, as were 34 percent of children with one White and one American Indian parent. These findings raise further questions about who is White while also pointing to the fact that it is more difficult for multiracials with one Black parent to identify as White than for those who have one parent who is Asian or American Indian.

In a more recent study, Lauren Davenport (2016) analyzed data from surveys conducted with 38,000 incoming college freshmen. She found significant variation in how children with parents of distinct racial backgrounds identify racially. In the study, 70.7 percent of those with one Black and one White parent self-identified as multiracial. By contrast, only 36.9 percent of their counterparts with one Latinx and one White parent identified as multiracial. Among students with one Asian parent and one White parent, 53.5 percent self-identified as multiracial. (For full data, see Figure 7-3.)

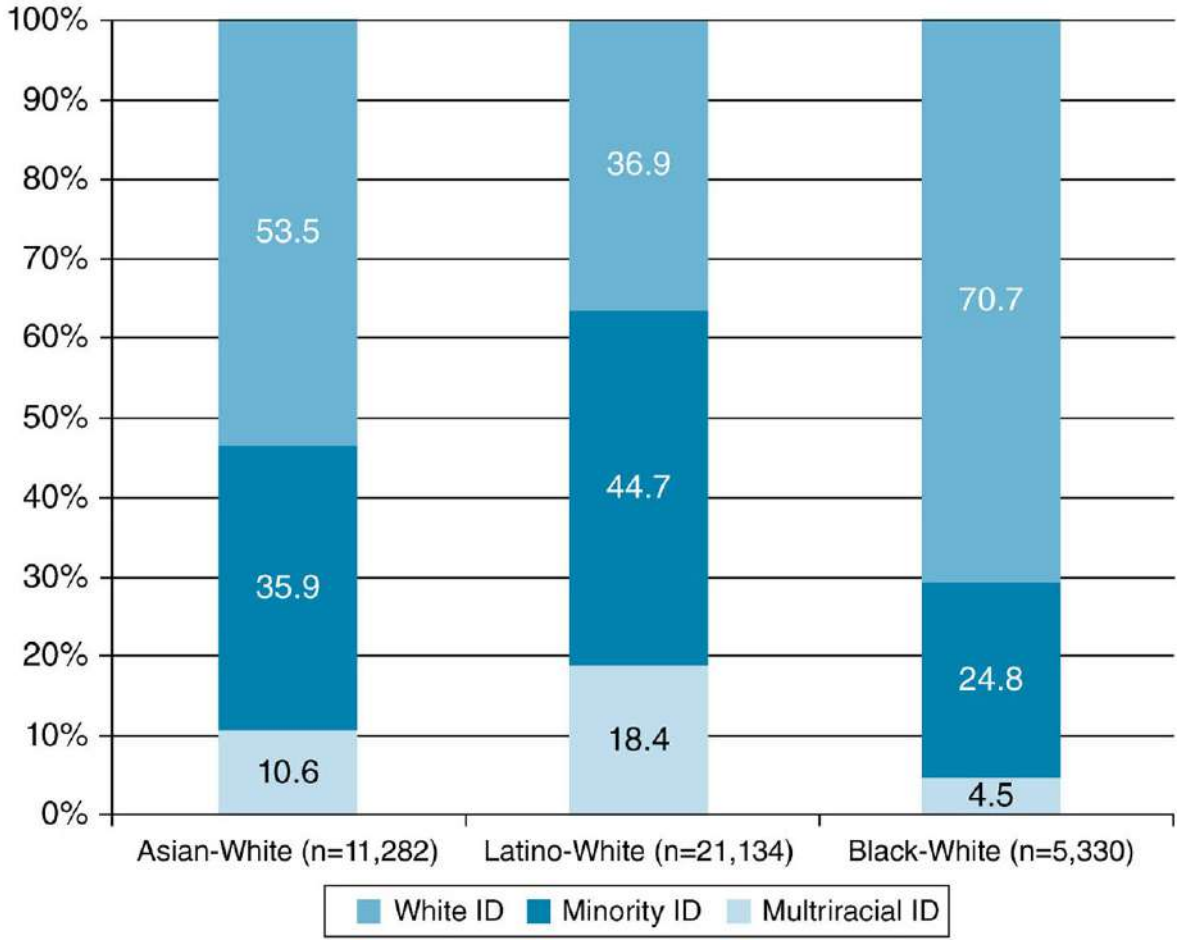


FIGURE 7-3 Percentage of Multiracial Children Who Identify as White, Minority, or Multiracial Source: Davenport (2016).

GLOBAL VIEW

Social, Cultural, and Intergenerational Whitening in Latin America

Scholars of race in Latin America argue that **whitening**—the process of becoming Whiter as a result of a change in social status and/or intermarriage—tones down racial conflict in the region. Whitening can occur in three ways:

- First, intergenerational whitening occurs when a Black person and a White person have a child, and the child is considered Whiter than the Black parent.
- Second, social whitening occurs when a person is born Black but through an increase in class status is considered White or Whiter in some situations.
- Third, cultural whitening occurs when a person is born Indian but acculturates to the dominant culture and becomes White or Whiter in some situations.

Intergenerational whitening is used in conjunction with Black or indigenous people; social whitening is more commonly used to discuss people of African descent; and cultural whitening is more commonly used to describe processes of incorporation for people of indigenous descent.

The whitening process works at the levels of both practice and ideology: people hope to "improve the race" through marrying lighter-skinned partners, and the governments of many Latin American countries have promulgated a policy of *mestizaje* (racial and cultural mixture) for the purpose of whitening the nation (Graham 1990; Skidmore 1993). The possibility of whitening is dependent on a definition of race that is not based solely on color or descent, but on other changeable factors.

Many scholars contend that in Latin America, race incorporates social and cultural characteristics (Rodríguez 2000). Jorge Duany argues that in the Caribbean, "phenotype and social status rather than biological descent define a person's racial identity" (1998, 150). Nancy Landale and R. S. Oropesa posit that in Latin America, "definitions of race are more fluid and ambiguous than is the case in the United States" (2002, 233). According to these scholars, the lack of rigidity in Latin American racial classifications allows a person in this region to change his or her racial identity.

Scholars of Afro-Latin America have argued that Black people can be whitened through a change in social status. Winthrop Wright, for example, claims that in Venezuela, "when a black escaped poverty, he or she ceased to be socially black" (1990, 10). Wright goes on to explain that "occasionally, financial and political success socially whitened black Venezuelans. For them and their white counterparts, clothes, education, language, social position, and the accumulation of wealth combined to make an individual whiter in the social context" (10). Wade argues that in Colombia, the trope "money whitens" does not mean that very dark-skinned people are actually classified as White, but that "rich black or mulatto people are treated as if they were white (or nearly white)" (1993, 339).

Studies of indigeneity in Latin America contend that classification with labels such as *cholo*, *indio*, or *mestizo* is not determined by skin color, but by cultural factors, including geographical origin and social standing (see van den Berghe 1974; Bourricaud 1975; de la Cadena 2000). As indigenousness is conceptualized in Peru, a person with brown skin and Black hair could be labeled as White (*blanco*), Indian (*indio*), or either of the two intermediate labels: *cholo* or *mestizo*. According to these studies, what determines one's racial status is not skin color, but level of education, cultural markers such as language and dress, and geographic and class location. In Peru, descendants of indigenous people can change their racial status from *indio* to *mestizo* by abandoning indigenous cultural forms, obtaining a formal education, and migrating to the coast (as this

entails leaving highland Indian villages). Highly educated Peruvians are considered White, and acculturated Indians are considered *mestizos*. Subsequent work on indigenous identities in Peru contests the simplicity of this framework, yet these studies do not address the absence of African-descended Peruvians from these discussions, nor do they dismiss the idea of cultural whitening for Indians (de la Cadena 2000; Weismantel 2001; García 2005).

Scholars of race in Latin America have found evidence of intergenerational whitening in Brazil and Colombia. One study found that highly educated non-White Brazilians are more likely than their less educated counterparts to label their children White (Schwartzman 2007). Data limitations did not allow Luisa Schwartzman to discern whether this is because class status directly influences racial self-identification or because higher-class brown Brazilians are lighter in skin tone and thus closer to the boundary between White and Brown, which facilitates their "boundary crossing." Research by Peter Wade (1993) in Colombia and Edward Telles (2004) in Brazil would support this latter claim, as they argue that only racially ambiguous people have the option of shifting racial categories.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.3: Whiteness and Racial Categories in Twenty-First-Century America

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Changes in Racial and Ethnic Classifications

In 2018, the Brookings Institute issued a report predicting that by 2045, White people will no longer be the majority racial group in the United States. By that year, White people are predicted to comprise 49.7 percent of the population, Latinx people 24.6 percent, Black people 13.1 percent, and Asians 7.9 percent (Frey 2018). Although most social scientists agree White people will no longer be the majority at some point in the future, there is widespread debate as to who should be included in the White category and how racial and ethnic identities should be categorized. Every ten years, a U.S. census is conducted, which includes at least one question about racial identification. These racial and ethnic classifications are constantly in flux, as Figure 7-4 shows.

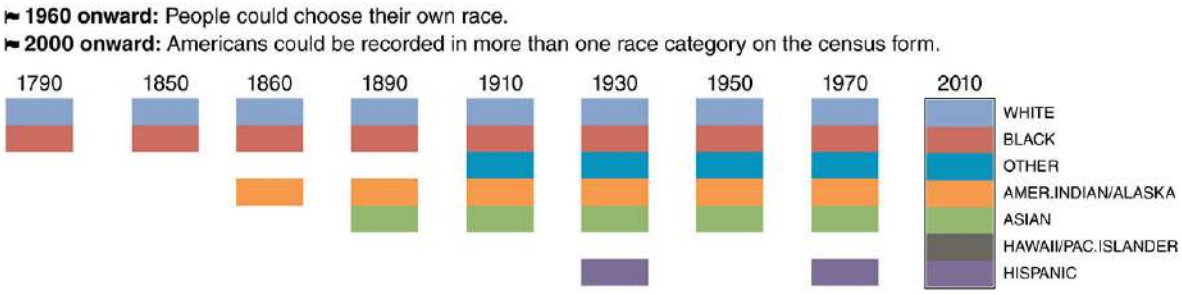


FIGURE 7-4 How U.S. Census Race Categories Have Changed over Time
Source: Pew Research (2015).

History of Racial and Ethnic Classifications

The first census was conducted in 1790. That census did not include a direct question about race, but it did include an enumeration of free

White men, free White women, other free persons, and slaves. Who was free and who was enslaved was important at the time, as slaves were counted as three-fifths of a person for the purpose of determining congressional representation.

In 1890, eight racial groups were listed on the census, half of which were for people of African descent—Black, mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon. This was prior to the officialization of the one-drop rule, according to which persons with any Black ancestry were considered Black. The other four races included on the 1890 census were Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and White—a reflection of immigration trends at the time.

In 1900, Black was the only racial identity option for people of African descent. The category of mulatto was reintroduced in 1910. Then, in 1930, for the first and only time, Mexican was listed as a race. Previously, Mexicans had been considered White (Lee 1993). In 2000, for the first time, people were allowed to list more than one race. These changes show that racial categories are a reflection of the time and not an enumeration of fixed differences between people. Racial categorizations also reflect the racial ideology of the time, which, as we have seen, changes according to social and political circumstances.

Are Latinx People a Race or Ethnicity?

The 2020 census asked respondents if they are of "Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin." This question was asked separately from the question "What is your race?" The race question gave people fifteen options that did not include "Hispanic or Latino." Many social scientists believed the 2020 census should have combined these two questions into one and included "Hispanic or Latino" as an option in the race question, alongside White, Black, American Indian, Chinese, and other racial categories. Why is "Chinese" a race and "Mexican" not, according to the U.S. Census?

The debates over the 2020 census revolved around important questions in U.S. society: Is Hispanic a race or an ethnicity? Are Hispanics White, Black, or something else? Many scholars are concerned that if Hispanic were enumerated as a racial category, we would lose important information—namely, data about the different experiences of White, indigenous, and Black Hispanics. People would have the option of choosing multiple races, meaning Black Hispanics could select both Black and Hispanic as their racial categories, but many race scholars are concerned that most Hispanics would only choose the Hispanic category, and we thus would have less information about Hispanics.

This controversy over racial categories in the census is part of a long history of changing racial categories in the United States. The only times in U.S. history that the same racial categories have been used in two consecutive censuses were in 1910 and 1920. Otherwise, the categories have changed each time there has been a new census. This constant flux reflects social constructions of difference rather than biological or genetic differences between people.

These three people are from the major racial groups in Peru: indigenous, Black, and White. If they were to migrate to the United States, would all three be classified as Latinx?

Revisiting the Definitions of Race and Ethnicity

How would one determine whether Latinx is a racial or an ethnic category? One way to look at this question is to use the definitions given in Chapter One and consider whether being Latinx refers more to phenotype, ancestry, and descent or to place and culture:

- **Races:** Categories of people based on a hierarchical worldview that associates ancestry, descent, and phenotype with cultural and moral attributes.

- **Ethnicities:** Group identities based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship.

It seems that the category of Latinx refers quite specifically to shared history, as it references people with origins in Latin America. One potential caveat is that many Latinx people trace their origins to California or Texas, former Spanish colonies that have been part of the United States since the mid-nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that Latinx people can trace their origins to a place that was once a Spanish colony. The issue with this definition is that places not traditionally considered part of Latin America, such as the Philippines and Equatorial Guinea, are also former Spanish colonies. Are Filipinos Latinx people? Officially, Filipinos are Asians, but Anthony Ocampo (2014) found in his interviews with Filipinos that many identified with Latinx people because of their shared history of Spanish colonialism and the Catholic religion.

What about culture? Language is one of the most salient aspects of cultural identity, and being Latinx is associated with speaking Spanish. However, many people who identify as Latinx do not speak Spanish. These include U.S.-born Latinx people who never learned Spanish, Brazilians who speak Portuguese, and perhaps even Haitians who speak Creole. We also need to think about how to classify indigenous migrants from Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador whose first language is Maya, Quechua, or another indigenous language. Does the Spanish language unify them?

Ethnicity is principally about culture, and there are a variety of cultural elements that people in the United States associate with being Latinx, such as salsa dancing, eating tacos, and having a quinceañera party for fifteen-year-old girls. However, there are many Latinx people who do not participate in these cultural events. Dominican Americans may be more likely to dance to bachata; Puerto Ricans eat rice and beans but not tacos; and salsa music is rarely heard in Brazil. Despite these nuances, it would be fair to say that there are rhetorics of culture, language, and place

associated with being Latinx. The argument in favor of considering "Latinx" an ethnicity or an ethnic group is that the term invokes an array of cultural practices—it relies on a discourse of culture and place, even though it is easy to poke holes in this rhetoric.

What about race? How could one make the argument that Latinx is a race? The category of Latinx has not traditionally been considered a race. Yet, it is possible that racial categories can emerge. A variety of sociologists argue that "Latinx" is emerging as a racialized category (Haney-Lopez 2006; Golash-Boza and Darity 2008; Vasquez 2011; Bonilla-Silva 2013). In order for "Latinx" to be considered a race, one would have to argue that the label invokes a discourse of phenotype and ancestry.

Anthony Ocampo (2014) interviewed Filipinos, many of whom told him that people often thought they were Latinx because of their tan skin, dark hair, and Spanish surnames. In terms of descent, there is a presumption that if two Latinx people have a child, that child will be Latinx. In the case of Cameron Diaz, for example, many people consider her to be Latina because her father's parents are from Cuba. The argument that Latinx is a racial category rests on the facts that the term *Latinx* invokes phenotype and ancestry. This debate—over whether Latinx is a racial or an ethnic category—is not settled. What do you think—is Latinx a race or an ethnicity?

Racialized Assimilation

Racialization refers to the process by which people are assigned races. *Assimilation* refers to the process by which immigrants become part of mainstream society. In the United States, this also could be understood as Americanization. **Racialized assimilation** is the process through which immigrants adopt the racial identities of their host countries.

We also could thus argue that Latinx people experience both racialization and assimilation, and that they experience these in different ways. One way to assess the extent to which Latinx people are adopting new identities in the United States is to ask them how they identify. In a national study of over 5,000 Latinx people that asked respondents what term they use to describe themselves most often, Daniel Martinez and Kelsey Gonzalez (2020) found that 56 percent of people of Latinx descent identify themselves primarily based on their nationality, 21 percent as Hispanic or Latinx, and 23 percent as American. These findings show that some, but not all, Latinx people are becoming "American."

Martinez and Gonzalez's study provides us with a broad overview of how Latinx people respond when asked how they identify but less information about why they identify this way. Research by Nilda Flores Gonzales (2017) helps us to understand why so few Latinx people identify as American, even when they have U.S. citizenship. Flores Gonzales (2017) interviewed ninety-seven Latinx U.S.-born millennials and found that, because of negative racialized experiences and racial discrimination, U.S.-born Latinx youths develop racialized notions of belonging/exclusion, in which they express being U.S. citizens but not Americans. As one of her participants explains, "I don't use American to describe myself because I think others would not. I am a citizen, though. I'm born here in the United States. But I think that the word 'American' is not used to describe Mexicans or any other Latinos in this country" (117). Based on these findings, Flores Gonzales argued that Latinx Millennials perceive themselves as not American and not White.

At the same time, national surveys reveal that nearly half of Latinx people identify racially as White. Using data from a national survey of Latinx people, Martinez and Gonzalez (2020) also found that 48 percent identified racially as White, 5 percent as Black, 1 percent as Asian, 17 percent as Hispanic/Latinx, 6 percent as mixed-race, and 24 percent as other. For some Latinx people, "Latinx" is a racial category. For others, it is not as their race is Black, White, or Asian.

Research by Ginetta Candelario (2007), Silvio Torres-Saillant (2000), and Clara Rodríguez (2000) reveals that many Latinx people primarily identify as Black. For example, Rodríguez interviewed José Ali, a young, dark-skinned Dominican. On the census, he described himself as being of Hispanic ethnicity and his race as "other." In the interview, he commented:

> *"By inheritance I am Hispanic. However, I identify more with Black people due to the fact that to white America, if you are my color you are a nigger. I can't change my color, and I do not wish to." … When asked, "Why do you see yourself as Black?" his answer was: "Because, when I was jumped by White people I was not called a 'spic,' but I was called a 'nigger.'" … Asked if his identity had changed over time, Ali said yes, "I realized that although I feel Hispanic, I was not seen as Hispanic or Latino, but as Black. Now I agree with whomever thinks I'm Black … no matter who I feel to be, I am categorized as Black." (Rodríguez 2000, 140–141)*

José Ali, like many Latinx people with visible African ancestry, is treated as a Black person in the United States. For this reason, he has internalized a Black identity and considers himself to be racially Black.

Recent research on Latinx racial and ethnic identification reveals there is a lot of diversity in these identifications. White skin does not guarantee Latinx people will identify as White and U.S. citizenship does not guarantee they will identify as American (Cebulko 2018; Flores Gonzalez 2017). Kara Cebulko (2018), for example, found that even Brazilians whose light skin led to preferential treatment and racialization as White often did not identify as American after becoming U.S. citizens because of the legal exclusion they experienced prior to becoming U.S. citizens. As noted above, Spaniards, whose European ancestry should guarantee them access to Whiteness, can find their Whiteness put into question (Soto Márquez 2019). Nevertheless, it is possible that the children of White Spaniards and White Brazilians born in the United States will be able to assimilate into Whiteness just as the children of Italian immigrants did in the early twentieth century. At the same time, the darker-skinned children of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Brazilian, Cuban, and Dominican immigrants, however, will not be able to assimilate into Whiteness or even into unhyphenated American-ness.

Insofar as the children of White Brazilians and Spaniards may be able to assimilate into unhyphenated Whiteness, the children of dark-skinned Dominicans may begin to identify as Black American, and the children of many Mexican immigrants will identify primarily as Mexican, one can argue that Latinx people experience racialized assimilation—where there are various possibilities for their racialization depending on their characteristics. Insofar as some White-passing Latinx people are outwardly identified as Latinx due to their accent, Spanish-language ability, and other cultural signifiers, we can argue that Latinx is an ethnic categorization. Insofar as some Americanized Latinx people who don't speak Spanish or engage in Latin American cultural practices are identified as Latinx based on their skin color and facial features, we can argue that Latinx is a racial category. What do you think? Does racialized assimilation capture intergenerational racial identifications for Latin American immigrants? Is Latinx a racial category? An ethnicity? Or both? Finally, can Latinx people be or become White?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.4: Changes in Racial and Ethnic Classifications

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Conclusion and Discussion

In this chapter, we have seen that it is far from obvious who is White and who is not. We have also seen that there are benefits related to being classified as White, yet that these benefits are not spread evenly across the White population. White men, middle-class White people, Christian White people, and Anglo White people are those whose Whiteness is much less likely to be put into question and for whom White privilege is most guaranteed. These White people—who fit most closely with hegemonic definitions of Whiteness—are those most prone to seeing themselves as "normal" or as not having a racial identity. As long as we frame race and racism as problems of people of color, White people can absolve themselves from talking or thinking about race. This is where discussions of White privilege can be useful.

At the same time, we have seen that the definition of who is White has changed over time and is likely to change in the future. Racial categories are likely to change in terms of both official classification and everyday meanings associated with race. Official racial classifications change when interest groups push the U.S. government to count them differently or when scholars insist on classification schemes that more closely reflect our society. However, the processes that produce changes in everyday classifications are much more complex. What other changes would take place if our racial hierarchies were to change drastically? Perhaps most important, why does the structure of the racial hierarchy change but not the fact that we have a hierarchy in the first place?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.5: Conclusion and Discussion

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

7.1 What is White privilege, and how does it work?

- There are many unearned benefits associated with being White. The concept of White privilege helps us understand this dimension of racial dynamics in the United States.

Review

» Who benefits from White privilege, and why?

Critical Thinking

» Make a case for whether White privilege is a useful concept.

» Does racism harm White people? If so, how? What are the advantages and limitations of considering these questions?

7.2 Does White privilege benefit all White people equally?

- Whiteness and White privilege vary by class, gender, and sexuality.

Review

» How is White privilege related to gender and sexuality?

Critical Thinking

» What are some specific ways that Whiteness may not afford men and women the same set of advantages?

7.3 Who is White in twenty-first-century America?

- Whiteness carries advantages with it, yet it is not always clear who is White and who is not.

Review

» Why and how do the meanings and limits of racial boundaries change?

Critical Thinking

» Why do you think that racial boundaries shift over time?

7.4 How have racial and ethnic classifications changed over time?

- Official racial categories change each time the census is administered.

Review

» What are some examples of ways that racial categories have shifted over time?

» What is the difference between social and cultural whitening?

Critical Thinking

» Certain physical traits, such as skin color, nose shape, and hair type, have been selected as symbols of racial difference. What other physical traits could have been used? Why do you think certain traits have become more important than others?

7.5 Are Latinx people a racial or an ethnic group?

- Scholars disagree over whether “Latinx” is a racial or an ethnic

category.

Review

» What are two key differences between race and ethnicity?

Critical Thinking

» How is the debate over whether Hispanic/Latinx is a race or an ethnicity a reflection of current racial ideologies?

Talking about Race

Imagine that while you are in line at the grocery store, you overhear one customer make a racist remark to another. What should you do? One strategy is to focus your attention on the person who is being targeted and to ignore the aggressor. Strike up a pleasant conversation about anything. For example, you can tell her you really like her shoes or ask her if she has seen a movie that is out in the cinema. Continue to talk to the person and create a safe space until the aggressor leaves.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.6: Check Your Understanding

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

LIST OF KEY TERMS

multiracials

racialization

Racialized assimilation

wage of whiteness

whitening

white person of color

White privilege

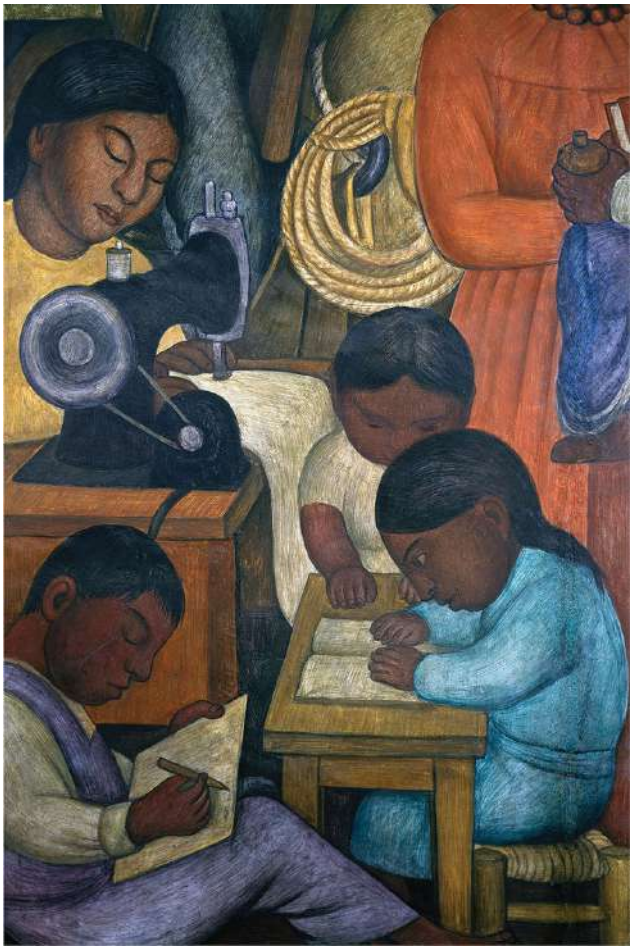
PART II

POLICY & INSTITUTIONS

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

8
Educational Inequality

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced



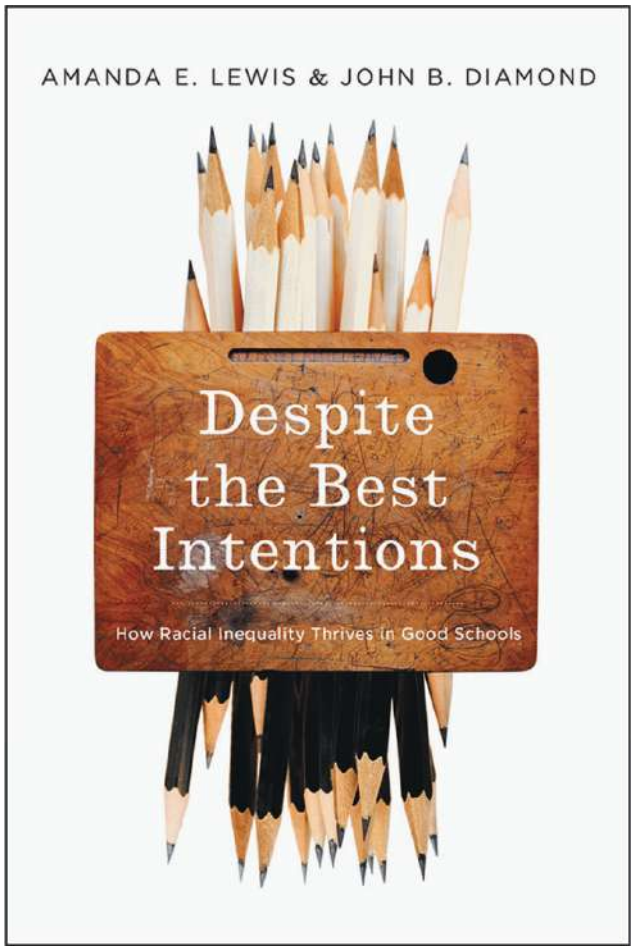
The Family at Work Together (detail from the Ministry of Education frescoes). Diego Rivera. 1923-1928. Fresco. (*De Agostini Picture Library/M. Seemuller/Bridgeman Images*)

As You Read

8.1 What are the dimensions of racial inequality in our educational system?

8.2 How important is the historical legacy of unequal educational opportunities?

8.3 How can we explain the continuing gap in the educational achievements of White, Asian, Black, Native American, and Latinx students?



Amanda Lewis and John Diamond spent five years at Riverview High School to understand why Black and Latinx children continue to fall behind White children in this affluent, diverse, and liberal district. As they explain in this excerpt from *Despite the Best Intentions*, Riverview is a diverse, high-achieving high school with a staff committed to racial equity. Yet, White students continue to be overrepresented in honors classes and are more likely to enroll in a four-year university.

On paper, Riverview seems like a place where all students should have ample opportunities to succeed academically and thrive personally. Put differently, Riverview presents a “least likely case” in which to find deep racial divisions in educational outcomes. In many ways, the school is a picture of racial integration and high student achievement (e.g., all groups are outperforming their peers in the city next door). There are numerous good reasons why parents want to

send their students to Riverview schools and to Riverview High in particular.

Given Riverview's many resources—well-trained teachers, high-quality facilities, abundant financial support from local property taxes—it is not surprising that the school's academic accomplishments are impressive. The graduation rate for the district's racial subgroups is higher than for their counterparts in the state as a whole. And when those students graduate from Riverview, between 75 and 80 percent attend college. Many Riverview graduates qualify as National Merit Scholars, and national magazines regularly name Riverview as one of the top high schools in the state. In this racially diverse school, students report significant cross-race interaction. When asked to identify the racial composition of their six closest friends in a 2001 survey, 80 percent of Black, Latino/a, White, and Asian students reported that either some or most of their friends were of a different race than themselves. Such levels of interaction are an important accomplishment in a society where many schools remain segregated.

In 2002, when we started spending significant time at the school, Riverview High School appeared to have achieved long-term, stable integration. The larger community was a place people moved to for the schools and for its diversity. While several nearby suburban communities have highly ranked schools, what differentiates Riverview from those places is its racial demographics—those other schools are attended primarily by White students. Thus, Riverview schools are not just good schools but good, diverse schools.

In the case of Riverview, a first foray into the school's hallways certainly conveys an image of an integrated space, as bustling interracial crowds of teenagers move through the corridors on their way to cafeterias, classrooms, gymnasiums, and administrative offices. And yet, students'

classroom destinations belie the image of integration. Whether they are on the move toward American history, biology, or geometry class, Black, Latina/o, and White students are more often than not heading in different directions. In fact, one key manifestation of the "achievement gap" at Riverview that Mr. Webber worried about is the quite different racial demographics of the school's "high" and "low" academic tracks, with white students far over-represented in the school's "top" tracks (honors and advanced placement) and Black and Latina/o students similarly overrepresented in the school's lower academic tracks.

Achievement differentials are apparent not just in academic tracks. For example, multiple datasets show cumulative grade point averages of White and Asian students to be a full point higher than the average for Black and Latina/o students. Test score outcomes also follow the racial patterns. On the 2006 ACT exam, the mean composite score for White students was about 26, while the score for African American and Latina/o students was about 18.

Finally, while Black and Latina/o Riverview graduates are much more likely than their peers in nearby Metro City to attend college, White Riverview graduates are far more likely than their Black and Latina/o peers to attend four-year colleges (more than 90 percent for Whites versus closer to 60 percent for Blacks and Latina/os). While only 5 percent of White Riverview graduates end up in two-year colleges, 30 percent of Black graduates and 40 percent of Latina/o graduates do so. Thus, while Riverview graduates' overall college attendance rates are high, the institutions that they attend are stratified by race and ethnicity. These numbers in part highlight why Black and Latina/o parents might choose to send their children to Riverview—Riverview students'

> outcomes are better than those of students in other nearby districts. However, these figures also highlight that even within schools like Riverview, which are considered to be very good, significant racial gaps exist in students' educational outcomes.
>
> *Source: Lewis and Diamond 2015*

The History of Educational Inequality

In the United States, the idea of equal opportunity holds great weight, even as the reality has fallen short of the ideal. Before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954, children who were not White were systematically prevented from attending White schools under a doctrine called "separate but equal."

Public schools in the United States have their origins in Massachusetts, when Horace Mann led the creation of the first board of education in 1837. In the North, Black children were often excluded from White schools (Martinez-Cola, forthcoming). In the South, many African Americans were prevented from learning to read and write, sometimes by law, and other times by exclusion from the public school system. With emancipation came the freedom to learn and to teach. African Americans across the South started schools wherever they could—in fields, in one-room schoolhouses, and in people's homes. Southern Black people who managed to learn to read and write taught others in their community. They also recruited Northerners as teachers. By the end of the nineteenth century, states across the South offered free public schooling for all children (Span 2002).

Beginning in the early twentieth century, racial tensions heightened. African Americans lost the right to vote in several southern states. In this context, school segregation was implemented and enforced in both the North and the South. With segregation, Black children were often left with few educational resources. Their communities often had to make do with one-room schoolhouses provided by the state, or else they had to pool their own funds to build better schools. Community-established schools provided some of the first educational opportunities to Black

children in the South, but they were gravely under-resourced (Span 2002).

Official segregation in public schools persisted until 1954. In some communities, there were separate schools for Native American, African American, and White students. In other cases, there were separate schools for Asian students. In still other cases, any student who was not White had to attend the schools for students of color (Martinez-Cola, forthcoming). The history of segregated and unequal schools in this country stretches over many decades and continues to have implications today.

A teacher reads to his students at a segregated school in Uno, Virginia, in 1947.

Indian Schools

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, U.S. government officials enacted policies to ensure that Native Americans would leave behind their traditional ways and assimilate into American society. One of the measures aimed at obliterating indigenous cultures was the creation of Indian schools, as these institutions were called.

The three main types of schools designed for Native Americans were (1) boarding schools located outside of reservations, (2) boarding schools located on reservations, and (3) day schools on reservations. In addition, starting in 1819, there were federally subsidized mission schools, which focused on teaching Native American children about Christianity. These segregated schools were designed to assimilate Native Americans into mainstream society (Watras 2004).

In 1877, there were 3,598 Native American children enrolled in 150 Indian schools. By 1900, there were 307 Indian schools, with a total enrollment of 21,568 children. The majority of these children (17,708) were in boarding schools (Martinez-Cola 2019). One of the earliest boarding schools was the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, established in 1879. The philosophy of the school's founder, Richard Henry Pratt, was that by fostering assimilation, the school could "kill the Indian and save the man." By 1926, about 70,000 of the 84,000 Native American children in the United States were attending a government-created school (Watras 2004). In 1930, there were 707 Indian schools across the United States, with 52 in Montana alone (Noel 2002).

Tom Torlino, who was Navajo, as he entered the school in 1882 (left), and how he appeared three years later.

Some Native American children attended boarding schools by choice, often with the hope that they would be provided for materially and would learn skills that would help them survive in mainstream society. Many children, however, were forced or coerced to attend these schools (Noel 2002). Once there, students who tried to run away were often harshly punished. At Chemawa School in Oregon, for example, there were forty-six runaway attempts in 1921 and seventy in 1922. At this school, runaways, called deserters, were forced to stand in the hallway with their arms and legs tied. If they tumbled over because they fell asleep, the matron would whip them and make them stand again (Marr n.d.). At Haskell Indian School in Kansas, there were fifty-three runaways in September 1910, and another thirty-five in October. If runaways were

returned to the school, they would face physical punishment for their transgression (Stout 2012).

When children arrived at these schools, they were often renamed. A young man named Raining Bird, for example, was renamed Arthur Raining Bird. If the boys had long hair, it was cut. Native American children were forbidden from speaking in their native language and from practicing their own religions. Children who spoke in their native languages were often physically punished if the teacher overheard them. Native languages, dress, and hairstyles were forbidden in order to inculcate Native American children in the ways of White Americans (Noel 2002).

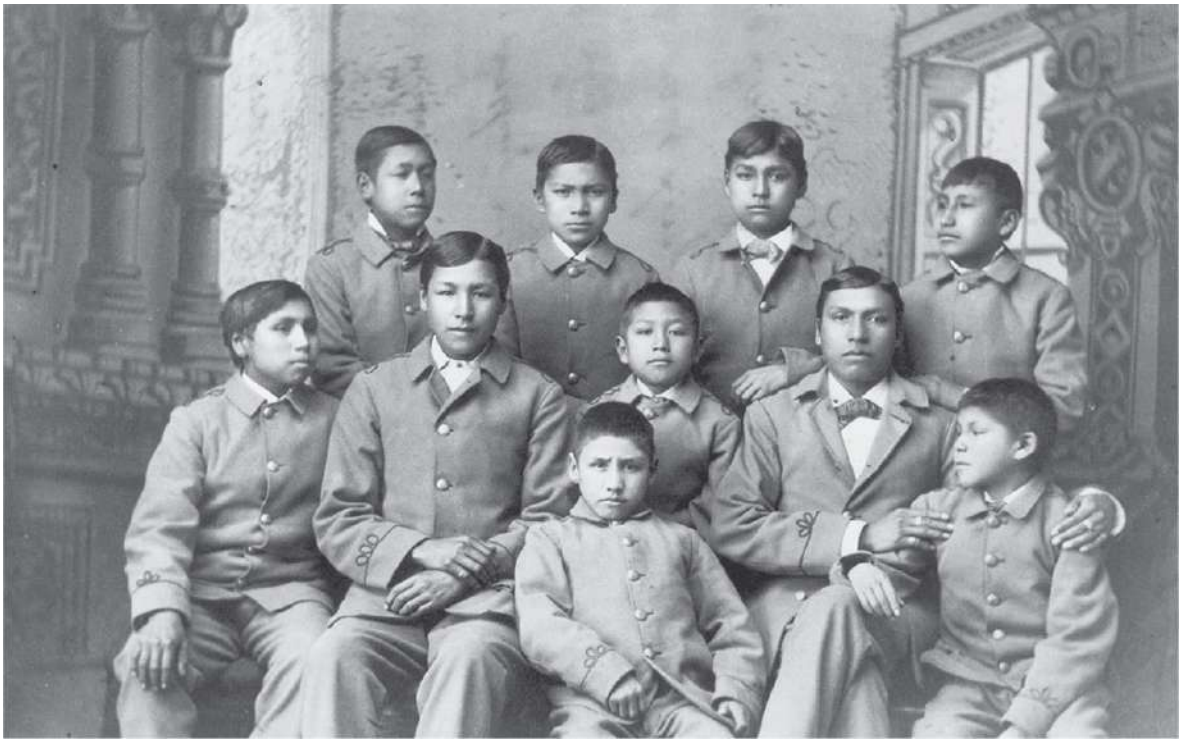
The children spent half of the day in classes learning English, reading, and mathematics, and the other half of the day doing industrial, agricultural, or domestic work, which were framed as "productive activities." The girls were assigned to kitchen duties, sewing, laundry, ironing, and cleaning, while the boys were required to do farm labor, gardening, grounds keeping, and carpentry (Noel 2002). In some cases, once Native American girls learned how to keep house, they were sent to local White homes to work as servants (Trennert 1983).

Native American children who went to boarding schools were often underfed at the schools, and many became ill or died. In 1926, a comprehensive study of Indian schools showed that the boarding schools' budget for feeding children was only eleven cents a day—$1.41 a day in today's currency, and not nearly enough to provide a reasonable diet. Because of undernourishment, the children often succumbed to diseases such as tuberculosis (Watras 2004). Many boarding schools across the United States today have burial grounds for Native American children who died while at school.

Chapter 8.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Following the official end of assimilation programs in 1993, these boarding schools were either reformed or closed. The repercussions of these institutions, however, continue to be felt. Genevieve Williams, who was born in 1922, went to an Indian school as a young girl. She remembers being forced to scrub floors on her hands and knees and being beaten for speaking in her native language. She recalls girls being flogged for wetting the bed. When she returned home at age fourteen, she no longer recognized her mother. Having never bonded with her own mother, Williams found it hard to nurture her own children. Her husband had been physically abused at school, and this also affected his ability to raise their children (King 2008). Lynne Eagle Feather's mother dropped her off at the Saint Francis Mission School in the early 1960s, when she was six years old. Her grandfather had attended Carlisle Indian School in the 1880s. Eagle Feather recounts being hit on the head by her teacher, a nun, with a pair of scissors. After boarding school, she was sent to foster care, where she was forced to work as well as experienced sexual assault. When Lynne Eagle Feather had her own children, she found herself unable to take care of them and sent them to a boarding school in Oklahoma. Her son, Paul Castaway, was shot and killed by the police in Denver, Colorado, in July 2015 (Hilleary 2017). The effects of Indian schools are felt across generations as the children of Native Americans like Genevieve Williams and Lynne Eagle Feather continue to suffer from this intergenerational trauma.



Students in cadet uniforms at the Carlisle Indian School, *c.* 1880.

Segregation and Landmark Court Cases

VOICES

Mary Tape

Mary and Joseph Tape lived with their four children in a middle-class home in San Francisco. In 1884, they tried to enroll their eight-year-old daughter, Mamie, in Spring Valley Primary School. She was not allowed to enter the schoolhouse because she was Chinese. The Tapes took their case to court. In 1885, the court decided in *Tape v. Hurley* that Chinese American children should be allowed access to schools. The city responded by opening a segregated school and obliging Mamie Tape to attend the newly created Chinese Primary School (Ngai 2010). Mary Tape responded on April 16, 1885, with the following letter in the *Daily Alta California.*

To the Board of Education—Dear Sirs:

I see that you are going to make all sorts of excuses to keep my child out of the Public schools. Dear sirs, Will you please to tell me! Is it a disgrace to be Born a Chinese? Didn't God make us all!!! What right have you to bar my children out of the school because she is a chinese Decend. They is no other worldly reason that you could keep her out, except that. I suppose, you all goes to churches on Sundays! Do you call that a Christian act to compell my little children to go so far to a school that is made in purpose for them. My children don't dress like the other Chinese. They look just as phunny amongst them as the Chinese dress in Chinese look amongst you Caucasians. Besides, if I had any wish to send them to a chinese school I could have sent them two years ago without going to all this trouble. You have expended a lot of the Public money foolishly, all because of a one poor little Child. Her playmates is all Caucasians ever since she could toddle around. If she is good enough to play with them! Then is she not good enough to be in the same room and studie with them? You had better come and see for yourselves. See if the Tape's is not same as other Caucasians, except in features. It seems no matter how a Chinese may live and

dress so long as you know they Chinese. Then they are hated as one. There is not any right or justice for them.

You have seen my husband and child. You told him it wasn't Mamie Tape you object to. If it were not Mamie Tape you object to, then why didn't you let her attend the school nearest her home! Instead of first making one pretense Then another pretense of some kind to keep her out? It seems to me Mr. Moulder has a grudge against this Eight-year-old Mamie Tape. I know they is no other child I mean Chinese child! care to go to your public Chinese school. May you Mr. Moulder, never be persecuted like the way you have persecuted little Mamie Tape. Mamie Tape will never attend any of the Chinese schools of your making! Never!!! I will let the world see sir What justice there is When it is govern by the Race prejudice men! Just because she is of the Chinese decend, not because she don't dress like you because she does. Just because she is decended of Chinese parents I guess she is more of a American then a good many of you that is going to prevent her being Educated.

Mrs. M. Tape.

Source: "Chinese Mother's Letter," *Daily Alta California*, April 16, 1885, 1. Available online via California Digital Newspaper Collection (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18850416.2.3).

Between 1896 and 1954, it was legal for states to deny African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans access to public schools and other facilities designated for White people (Wollenberg 1974). The 1896 court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (discussed in Chapter Three) was used to justify the existence of separate educational facilities for White and non-White students. By 1931, more than three-quarters of the school districts in California practiced segregation (Wollenberg 1974). At that same time, 90 percent of the schools in Texas were racially and ethnically segregated (Godfrey 2008).

The schools established for non-White people were inferior in many ways to those that served White people. Schools for Mexican American children were designed to "Americanize" them through instruction in cooking, hygiene, English, and civics. In these segregated schools, children were punished for speaking Spanish, and girls were taught home economics so that they could work in the homes of White people (Wollenberg 1974). People took to the courts to address these educational inequalities. There were over 100 different court cases brought against legal segregation. Most of these cases involved African American plaintiffs. However, two involved Mexican American schools, four involved Chinese American schools, and five had Native American plaintiffs (Martinez-Cola 2019).

In 1924, Pike and Annie Piper, who were members of the Paiute Tribe of Inyo County, California, filed a lawsuit on behalf of their daughter, Alice, after she had been denied admission to the White school. Their lawyers argued that Alice had adopted civilized ways and that she was a citizen of both California and the United States under the recently passed Dawes Act. The judge ruled in their favor and the following year, Alice Piper and her fellow Paiute plaintiffs enrolled in Big Pine school along with the local White children (Martinez-Cola 2019).

In the 1930s and 1940s, Mexican Americans in Texas and California initiated protests against separate and inferior schools for Mexican American children. In Texas, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), founded in 1929, led the protests. The first case brought by LULAC was *Salvatierra v. Del Rio Independent School District*, in 1930. The court decided that segregation was permissible, reasoning that it was not based on race but on language and academic abilities. Over the next two decades, advocates of educational equality in Texas continued to be unsuccessful through a series of similar court cases.

One of the first victories for Mexican Americans came in 1947 with the case of *Mendez v. Westminster*, when a federal circuit court in California ruled that the segregation of children of Mexican and Latin American descent was unconstitutional. The *Mendez* case was a critical forerunner

to the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which overturned the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling. *Mendez* began when Gonzalo Méndez, a Mexican American naturalized U.S. citizen, and his Puerto Rican wife, Felicítas, attempted to enroll their three children in the 17th Street Elementary School in Orange County, California. Although Gonzalo Méndez had attended the school himself as a boy, his children were turned away because the school no longer allowed Mexican Americans to attend. Following failed attempts to win over the school board, he and 5,000 other people filed suit against several Orange County school districts in 1945. Their court case was successful, and the Supreme Court ruled that segregation based on a Spanish surname was unconstitutional (Ruiz 2001).

For African Americans, the landmark case regarding educational segregation was *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which was a compilation of four separate cases from four different towns. It involved two rural communities—Clarendon County, South Carolina, and Prince Edward County, Virginia—and two urban districts—Topeka, Kansas, and Wilmington, Delaware. African Americans in each of these communities perceived that the education their children received in segregated schools was inferior to that given to White children. Indeed, local governments spent less money on the education of Black children. Nationally, prior to 1950, the average expenditure for Black students was less than two-thirds of that for White students (Siddle Walker 2000). In 1951, in Clarendon County, for example, the annual average expenditure was $44.32 per Black student, compared with an average of $166.45 per White student. Additionally, White children did not have to pay for their school materials, whereas Black students did (Anderson and Byrne 2004). These unequal expenditures meant that African Americans had access to fewer educational resources (Siddle Walker 2000). Parents in Clarendon County got together to protest this tremendous inequality, and their case became one of the four cases heard in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Mexican American girls in elementary school in New Mexico, 1943.

Despite significant obstacles, African Americans in the pre–civil rights era worked hard to ensure that their children had educational opportunities. Parents often provided equipment and spaces when they could. Communities mobilized to ensure educational opportunities. At exemplary high schools for Black students such as Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C., 60 percent of graduates went on to attend college in the 1950s. At this same high school, several of the teachers had doctorates from elite institutions (Siddle Walker 2000).

The rulings in *Mendez v. Westminster* and *Brown v. Board of Education* were only the beginning of the long process of school desegregation. In Prince Edward County, Virginia, for example, the *Brown* decision led to the closing of all public schools so that White students would not have to integrate. In 1964, a Supreme Court decision—*Griffin v. County School*

Board of Prince Edward County—forced the county to reopen public schools (Orfield and Lee 2004).

The Persistence of Racial Segregation in the Educational System

Educational institutions are no longer allowed to prevent non-White children from attending. Nevertheless, segregation persists, in part because school districts are not required to promote integration. In a landmark civil rights case, *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Ed*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that federal courts could order school districts to rezone schools and bus students to achieve school desegregation. School districts that were ordered to desegregate did so and schools were successfully integrated. These measures also led to positive outcomes for Black students in integrated schools—their graduation rates increased as did their post-secondary school earnings, and their incarceration rates fell (Liebowitz 2017). However, once schools achieved integration, proponents of neighborhood schools took their cases to court and argued schools should be released from court-ordered desegregation. In 1991, in *Dowell v. Oklahoma City,* the Supreme Court decided that school districts that had achieved desegregation could be released from court orders. Figure 8-1 shows that schools released from court order rapidly resegregated.

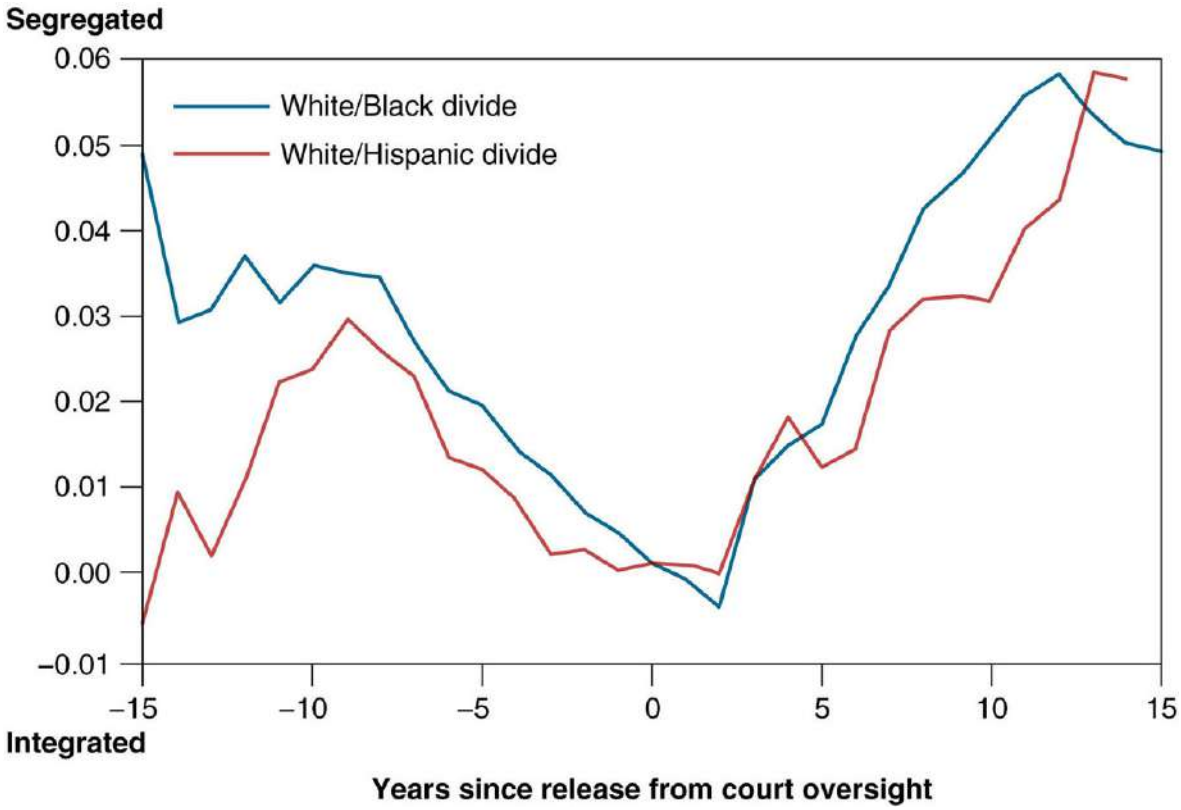


FIGURE 8-1 The Return of Segregation after Release from Court Oversight (Year 0 in Figure) Stanford researchers used a "dissimilarity index" to measure segregation, from 0 (balanced integration) to 1 (complete segregation). Source: PBS Frontline (2014)/Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis (2012).

Although 1988 was a high point of desegregation for Black students, the *Dowell* decision reversed that trend. Since 1991, we have seen increasingly high rates of segregation, as measured by the percentage of schools that are over 90 percent non-White—nearly one in five by 2013 (Orfield, Ee, Frankenberg, and Siegel-Hawley 2016). In 2017, 70 percent of Black students attended a school that was majority students of color, as compared to 13 percent of White students (García 2020).

This high level of racial segregation is often associated with poverty: in 2017, 72.4 percent of Black eighth-graders attended a high-poverty school, as compared to 31.3 percent of White students. In that same year, only 3 percent of Black eighth-graders attended a school that was low-poverty and mostly White, as compared to nearly a quarter of White eighth-graders (García 2020). There is a direct relationship between the

percentage of Black and Latinx students in a school and the percentage of poor students (Orfield and Frankenberg 2014). Segregation also affects school performance: Black students in high-poverty schools with mostly students of color scored twenty points lower on the mathematics assessment than did Black students in low-poverty and mostly White schools (García 2020).

Chapter 8.2 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Affirmative Action in Higher Education

Racial diversity in schools is a contentious issue at the university level as well. Title VI of the 1968 Civil Rights Act enabled colleges and universities to take **affirmative action** to enhance racial diversity on campus. Affirmative action encompasses policies and procedures designed to combat ongoing discrimination in schools and in the workplace. In higher education, it has meant giving preferential treatment to people who are members of historically disadvantaged groups. In schools with affirmative action programs, admissions committees can consider the racial diversity of applicants as one factor in their decision to admit a student to a university.

In 1965, only 2 percent of medical students in the country were African American. In response to this underrepresentation, the University of California at Davis Medical School set aside 16 of its 100 admission slots for underrepresented minority students. In 1978, a White applicant named Allan Bakke was denied admission to the medical school. Bakke believed that in the absence of these racial quotas, he would have been admitted. He therefore filed a class-action lawsuit alleging that UC Davis had discriminated against him based on his race. In the *Regents of the*

University of California v. Bakke (1978) case, the Supreme Court ruled that the preferential racial quotas did deny equal protection to White students and thus were unconstitutional. However, the Supreme Court also ruled that race could still be used as one factor in determining admission. With this ruling, racial quotas were no longer permissible, but diversity could continue to be used as a factor in determining admission. The *Bakke* decision thus ended the relatively short history of racial quotas in university admissions, leaving us today with more ambiguous options for promoting diversity. The University of California system, for example, can argue that a student or job candidate would contribute to the diversity of the campus, but it cannot say that it did or did not offer a position because of racial or ethnic identity (Yosso, Parker, Solorzano, and Lynn 2004).

After the *Bakke* decision, affirmative action programs continued to come under attack across the United States. In 1996, California voters passed Proposition 209, which banned the consideration of race in higher education admissions. Consequently, admission rates of Black, Latinx, and Native American students to the University of California system fell dramatically. Between 1997 and 1998—the year the ban took effect—admissions of underrepresented students fell 61 percent at UC Berkeley and 36 percent at UCLA. These disparities continue today: Black, Latinx, and Native American students made up 54 percent of all California high school graduates in 2012 but just 27 percent of all UC freshmen in that same year (Murphy 2013).

In June 2016, in *Fisher v. The University of Texas*, the Supreme Court reaffirmed that the University of Texas has the right to take racial status into consideration in university admissions. This factor is one of many considered, including grades, test scores, extracurricular activities, hardship, and other personal characteristics. The case came to the Supreme Court after applicant Abigail Fisher, who is White, filed a lawsuit alleging that her denial of admission to the University of Texas was due to her race. Fisher was not in the top 10 percent of her high school graduating class, and she thus was not able to enroll at the

University of Texas through the program that guarantees admission to top students in Texas. Instead, she was competing for a relatively small pool of spots for students not in the top 10 percent. University officials argued that, with an SAT score of 1,180 and a 3.59 GPA, Fisher's record simply did not qualify her for admission. The Supreme Court agreed that Fisher had not faced discrimination based on her Whiteness (Hannah-Jones 2016).

Demonstrators in support of affirmative action in schools gather outside the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 8.1: The History of Educational Inequality

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Educational Inequality Today

At all levels of schooling, educational achievements in the United States vary by racial or ethnic group, affecting earning potential (At a Glance 8.1). If we look at high school completion rates for people aged twenty-five to twenty-nine in the United States, we will see that, by 2018, nearly all White and Asian people had a high school degree, as compared to 92 percent of Black people, and 85.2 percent of Hispanic people. However, it is also notable that, between 2008 and 2018, the percentage of Latinx people in this age category who completed high school increased from 68.3 percent to 85.2 percent. The disparities are starker once we consider college completion rates. In 2018, 70 percent of Asians aged twenty-five to twenty-nine had completed college, as had 43.5 percent of White people in the U.S. In contrast, only 22.6 percent of Black people and 20.7 percent of Latinx people had completed college (Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow 2019). Notably, the rates of college completion increased for every group except Black students between 1996 and 2010 (see Figure 8.2). College completion rates are critical for lifetime earnings: in 2017, men with at least a Bachelor's degree earned an average of $71,990, as compared to $42,440 for men with a high school degree (Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow 2019). And, in 2018, high school dropouts were three times as likely to be unemployed as people who had completed college (Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow 2019).

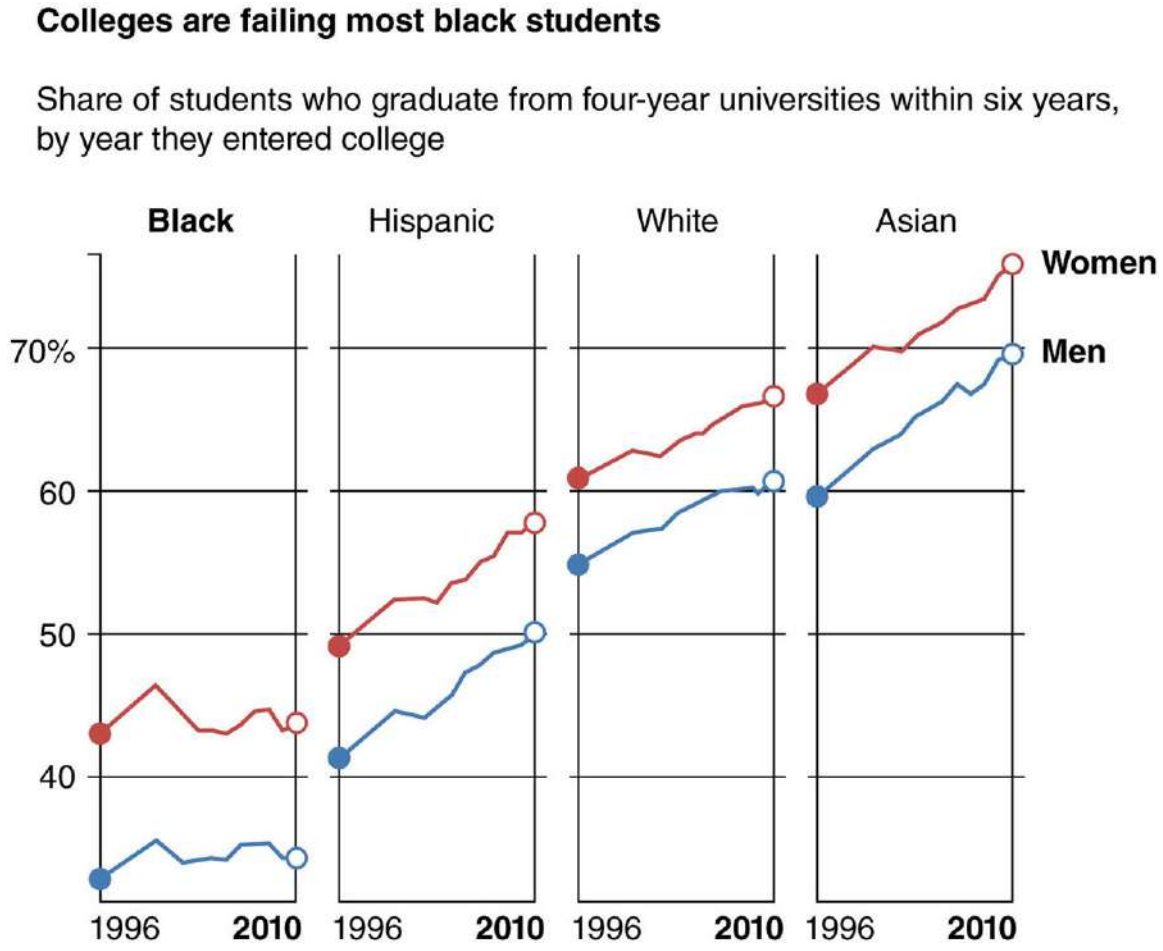
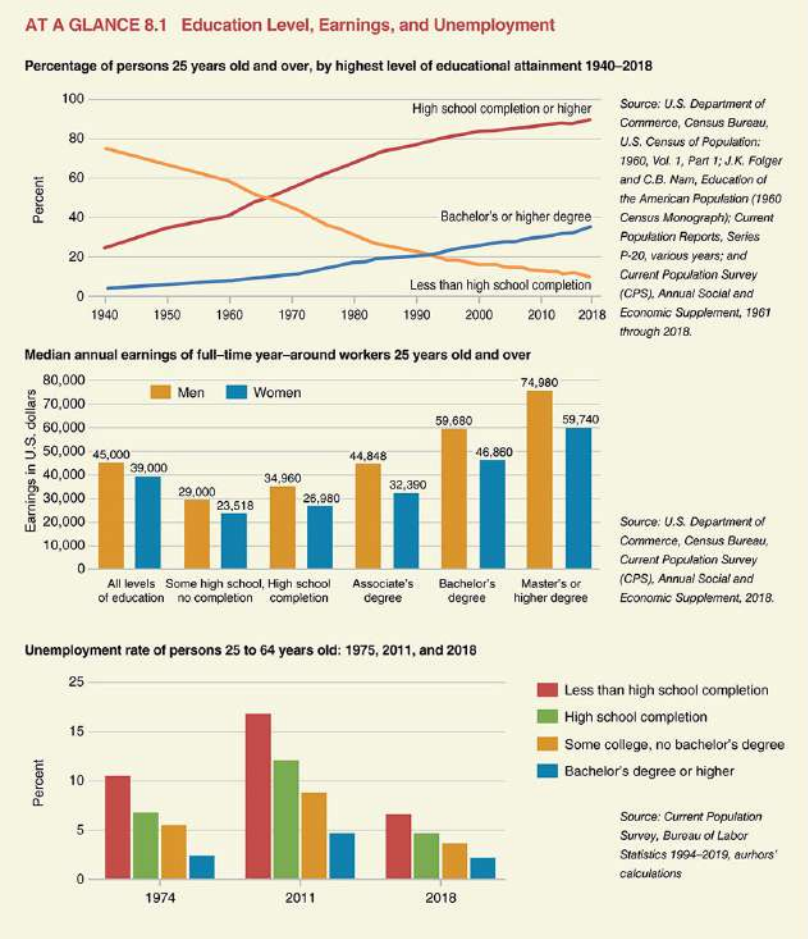


FIGURE 8-2 Share of Students Who Graduate from Four-Year Universities within Six Years, by Year They Entered College


AT A GLANCE 8.1 Education Level, Earnings, and Unemployment
Percentage of persons 25 years old and over, by highest level of educational attainment 1940–2018
Percent
High school completion or higher
Bachelor's or higher degree
Less than high school completion
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, U.S. Census of Population: 1960, Vol. 1, Part 1; J.K. Folger and C.B. Nam, Education of the American Population (1960 Census Monograph); Current Population Reports, Series P-20, various years; and Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1961 through 2018.
Median annual earnings of full-time year-around workers 25 years old and over
Earnings in U.S. dollars
Men
Women
45,000
39,000
29,000
23,518
34,960
26,980
44,848
32,390
59,680
46,860
74,980
59,740
All levels of education
Some high school, no completion
High school completion
Associate's degree
Bachelor's degree
Master's or higher degree
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2018.
Unemployment rate of persons 25 to 64 years old: 1975, 2011, and 2018
Percent
Less than high school completion
High school completion
Some college, no bachelor's degree
Bachelor's degree or higher
1974
2011
2018
Source: Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics 1994–2019, authors' calculations

Although disparities in educational outcomes persist, it is undeniable that they have lessened over the course of the past 100 years in the United States. Legal segregation has been banished, Native American children are no longer forced to attend boarding schools, standard curricula now include multicultural components, nearly all youth have achieved literacy, and high school graduation rates for all racial groups are converging. Between 1971 and 1996, the gap in reading test scores between Black people and White people shrank by almost one-half (Kao and Thompson 2003). There are still some significant disparities among racial groups, but they are not as pronounced as they were at the beginning of the twenty-first century, when 28 percent of Hispanic/Latinx youth dropped out of high school, compared with only 12 percent in 2014 (Fry and Taylor 2013; Krogstad 2016).

In aggregate data, it becomes apparent that Asian students are outperforming all other students in test scores and high school and

college completion rates. These achievements have led to a **"model minority" myth**, according to which Asians are widely perceived as the racial minority group that has succeeded in the United States. As we saw earlier, Asians have not always been viewed as a model minority. In fact, as already noted, they were prevented from attending public schools in California in the late nineteenth century. The current stereotype did not become prevalent until the late twentieth century (Wing 2007). And today, even though Asians perform better on average than other groups, it is not the case that every single Asian student is an overachiever. Additionally, when we break the Asian population down into groups by national origin, we can see a more complex story (Ngo and Lee 2007). For example, only about 14 percent of Hmong, Laotian, or Cambodian adults in the United States have college degrees, compared with about half of all Chinese, Filipino, and Pakistani adults. Indian adults have the highest rate of college graduation, at 70 percent (Piccorossi 2012).

There continue to be disparities in college attendance and completion, although these disparities have changed over the years. In 2012, Asians were the most likely racial or ethnic group to attend college, with 84 percent of Asian recent high school graduates enrolled in college. Of these students, 79 percent were enrolled at a four-year college or university, and 91 percent were enrolled full time (Fry and Taylor 2013). In 2012, 69 percent of Latinx high school graduates enrolled in college, compared with 67 percent of White high school graduates, 84 percent of Asians high school graduates, and 63 percent of Black high school graduates. Latinx people, however, were less likely to attend a four-year college than White students. In 2012, 56 percent of Latinx college students were at a four-year college, compared with 72 percent of White students. In addition, Latinx people were less likely than White people to attend a selective college, to be enrolled in college full time, and to complete a four-year degree (Fry and Taylor 2013).

Educational disparities among racial and ethnic groups are evident at each level of the educational system. In the next section, we will explore these disparities in more detail and look at the various explanations

sociologists offer for them. Before we proceed with sociological explanations, pause to think about why Black, Latinx, and Native American students are faring less well than White and Asian students in the educational system. What have we learned so far that might inform your explanations?

RESEARCH FOCUS

Native American/Alaska Native College Student Retention

American Indian and Alaska Native students are among the least likely to enroll in college and to complete college once enrolled. Only about a third of American Indian and Alaska Native students who enroll in college graduate within six years, compared with over half of students from the general population. These facts compelled Raphael Guillory (2009) to design a study to better understand the obstacles American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students face in terms of college enrollment, retention, and completion.

Each summer since 2005, UC Riverside has hosted The Gathering of the Tribes, an annual program designed to encourage Native Americans to go to college.

Guillory examined enrollment and retention rates of AI/AN students at three universities: Washington State University, University of

Idaho, and Montana State University. He conducted focus group interviews with thirty AI/AN students at these institutions, in addition to interviews with faculty members and administrators.

The AI/AN students contended that their primary motivation for staying in university was their desire to give back to their community and their family. They spoke about the importance of being a role model for their younger family members, making their parents and other family members proud, and being able to give back to their community once they graduated.

The students cited social support on campus, including Native American and multicultural centers, as critical to their persistence. It was important for the students to be around other AI/AN students, particularly for those who came from reservations and were accustomed to being in primarily AI/AN communities.

Guillory suggests the following three strategies to help retain AI/AN students:

1. Maintain connections to family and tribal communities.
2. Address single-parent students and students with family issues.
3. Provide academic assistance through peer mentoring.

For Discussion

1. What can we learn from the history and particularity of the American Indian experience that might help develop effective strategies to enhance their educational opportunities?
2. How might these strategies be useful when applied to other groups?

Source: Guillory 2009.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 8.2: Educational Inequality

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The Achievement Gap: Sociological Explanations for Persistent Inequality

What explains persistent disparities in educational outcomes by race and ethnicity? Sociologists describe the disparate educational outcomes of White, Asian, Black Latinx, and Native American people as the **achievement gap**. A variety of sociological explanations have been offered for this gap, and we will explore a few of these in this section.

The first observation to make when discussing educational disparities is that public education in the United States depends heavily on local property taxes. Inequalities in housing values translate into inequalities in schools.

GLOBAL VIEW

Affirmative Action in Brazil

In Brazil, nearly half the population is of African descent, yet this group is underrepresented in positions of political and economic power. In 2003, only 2 percent of the deputies in the national congress identified themselves as Black. Black Brazilians make up 70 percent of the poorest decile (tenth of the population) in Brazil and only 15 percent of the richest decile (Htun 2004). And in 2000, only 2 percent of university graduates were Black (Lloyd 2004). A more recent study shows that, despite reforms, White Brazilians continue to have an average of two more years of schooling than Black Brazilians (Telles, Flores, and Urrea-Giraldo 2015).

The Brazilian constitution has long included provisions that prevent discrimination. However, these provisions have not been enough to overcome racial inequality. In response to public pressure, beginning in the early twenty-first century, the Brazilian government turned to affirmative action (Htun 2004).

Today in Brazil, federal law requires all federal universities to implement affirmative action policies. Federal universities in Brazil are among the best institutions of higher education in the country and are free of charge. Paradoxically, the students most likely to gain admission to these free public universities are those who attend expensive, elite secondary schools. Wealthy families, which are disproportionately White, have historically expended large amounts of money on private secondary schools to ensure that their children gain admission to the public universities (Telles and Paixão 2013).

In consequence, it has historically been difficult for non-White students to gain admission to these schools. Brazilian university admission is based primarily on students' scores on an exam. However, public secondary schools often seldom provide students with adequate preparation to attain sufficiently high scores on the exam. This disparity in scores between public and private school

students led to an overrepresentation of wealthy and White students in Brazilian universities.

In October 2003, the state of Rio de Janeiro announced that 40 percent of admission slots for its state universities would be reserved for Black and Brown students. Soon afterward, the state of Minas Gerais set aside 50 percent of its slots for students from public secondary schools (Telles 2004). In subsequent years, other public universities added their own versions of affirmative action policies, giving preference to students based on characteristics such as public high school attendance; family income; or being Black, indigenous, or Brown (Telles and Paixão 2013). In 2012, then-President Dilma Rousseff signed the "Law of Social Quotas," which required all public universities to reserve half of their admission spots for students who had attended public high schools. The intention of the law was to increase racial diversity by using public school attendance as a proxy. Rousseff indicated that the goal of the law was to increase the number of African-descended students in public universities from 8,700 to 56,000 over the next ten years (Glickhouse 2012).

Parental Socioeconomic Status

In the United States, parental education, income, and wealth are not distributed evenly. A major factor that can help us understand racial and ethnic inequality in education is overall socioeconomic inequality. For example, one study tracked the college completion rates of youth who were sophomores in high school in 1980. Over half of the youth whose family incomes were in the top 25 percent had earned a college degree by 1992, compared with only 7 percent of those whose family incomes were in the lowest 25 percent. The chances of college completion for the higher-income group were thus seven times higher than the chances for the lower-income group. Overall, differences in family income can explain

about one-third of the test score gap between Black people and White people and nearly all of the differences in college completion rates (Gamoran 2001).

In addition to family income, parental education matters. Children with parents who have college degrees, for example, are much more likely to attend college than children whose parents have not completed high school. Parental education is one factor that explains Asians' relatively high educational attainment. In 1990, 65 percent of immigrants from India had college degrees, as did 63 percent of immigrants from Taiwan. However, it is important to recognize the variety in the Asian American experience: less than 5 percent of Cambodian and Laotian immigrants had a college degree in 1990 (Kao and Thompson 2003). The reason for these differences is related to immigration policy: most Taiwanese and Indian immigrants came on skill-based visas, which required high levels of education, whereas most Cambodians and Laotians came as refugees.

Children from working-class backgrounds tend to fare less well in school than children from middle-class or wealthy families. In 2013, these differences in test scores persisted, both by socioeconomic status and by race/ethnicity (Kena et al. 2016; Figures 8-3 and 8-4). In another national study, Paschall, Gershoff, and Kuhfield (2018) found that gaps in reading and math test scores between White children and their Black and Latinx counterparts persist. They also found that the achievement gap between White children of low socioeconomic status and their poor Black and Hispanic counterparts has grown. In an earlier study, sociologists Vincent Roscigno and James Ainsworth-Darnell (1999) found that family socioeconomic status could explain about half of the difference between the test scores of Black and White children. What explains the other half? Why do Black and Latinx children fare less well in school than White children who have the same family structure and income levels? Sociologists offer a few explanations, which we will consider next.

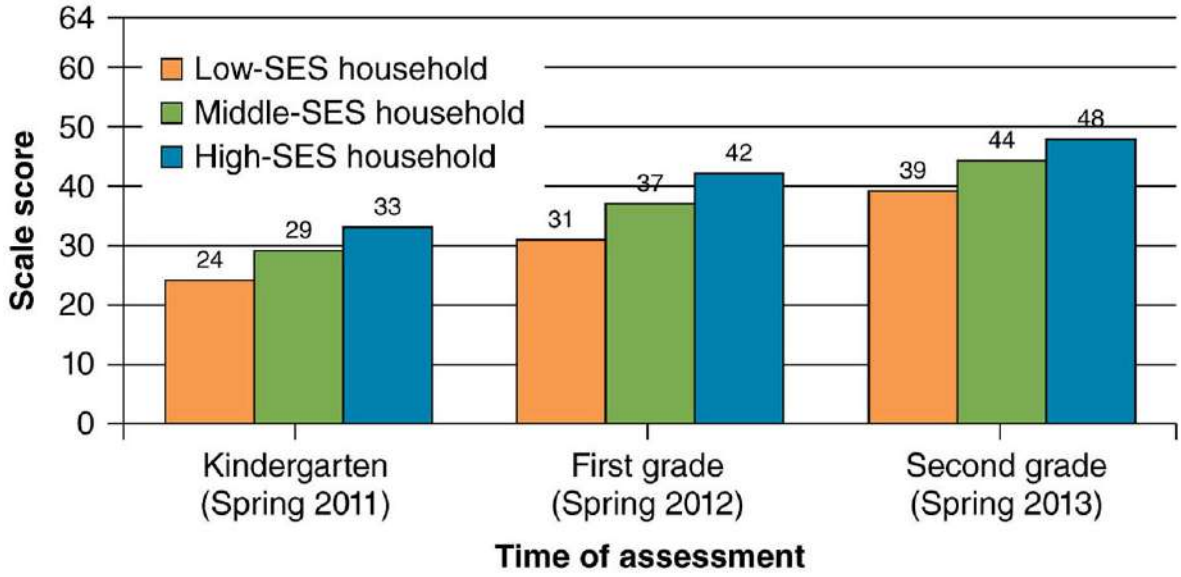


FIGURE 8-3 Average National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Scale Scores of Fourth- and Eighth-Grade Students, by Race/Ethnicity: 1992, 2003, 2015 Source: Kena et al. (2016).

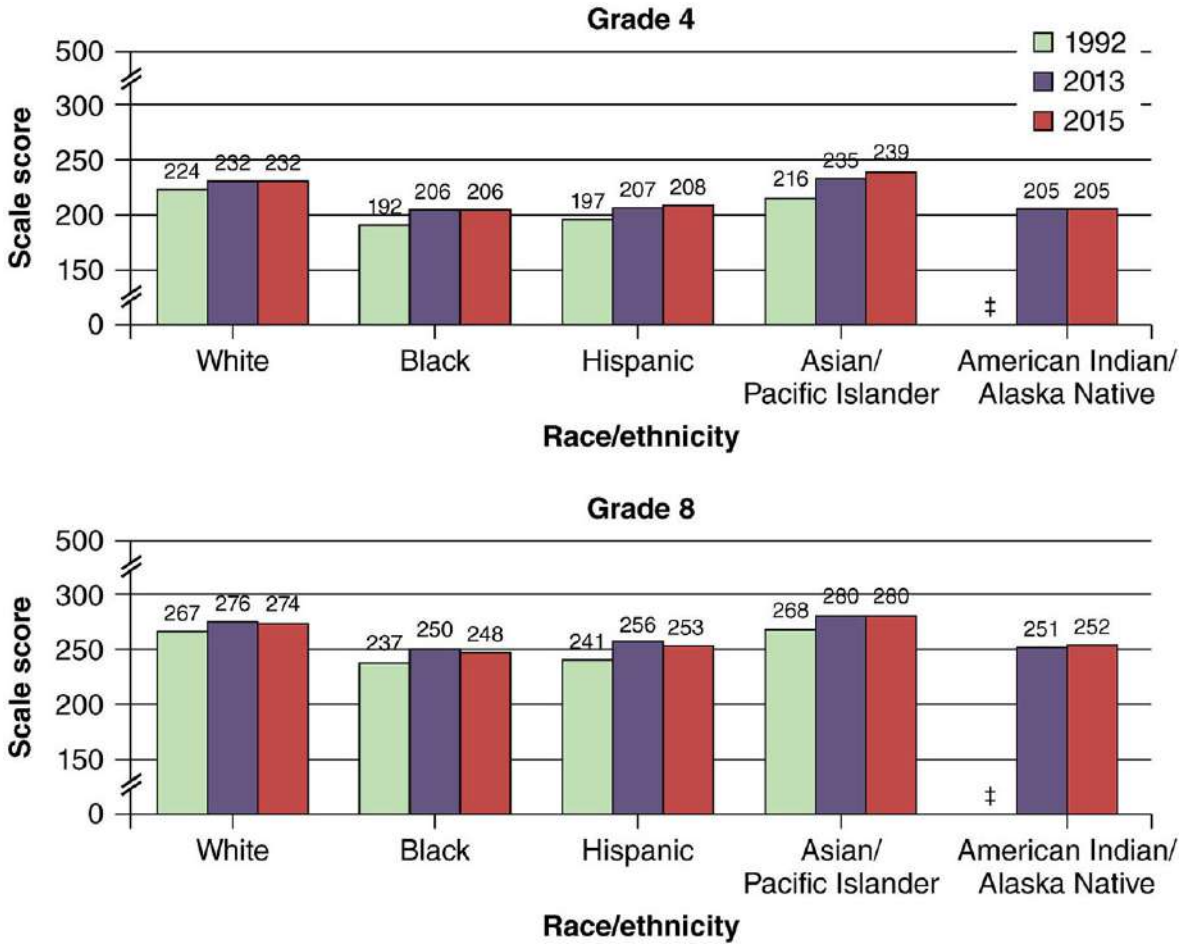


FIGURE 8-4 Average National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading scale scores of fourth- and eighth-grade students, by race/ethnicity: 1992, 2003, 2015 Source: Kena et al. (2016).

Cultural Explanations: "Acting White" and Other Theories

Sociologists and other social scientists have long conducted research on the extent to which culture plays a role in the achievement gap. Culture is a broad analytic concept and can refer to a wide variety of factors, often revealing disconnects among students, parents, and teachers.

Scholars of education have spent much ink trying to understand why Black students perform more poorly in school and have lower test scores than White students. One explanation that gained currency in the 1980s and 1990s is the **oppositional culture** thesis. Anthropologists Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu (1986) are credited with coming up with this thesis, which has two basic components: (1) African American children don't do well in school because they equate school success with "**acting White**," and (2) African American children have responded to widespread discrimination by developing an identity in opposition to dominant White culture, and thus in opposition to school success. The basis of this argument is that Black children receive signals from both the White and Black communities that lead them to reject schooling as a route to success. Fordham and Ogbu contend that the experiences of Black students and their parents with discrimination cause them to distrust White authority figures and institutions. Additionally, they argue that Black students develop anti-achievement attitudes to avoid peer sanctions. They found that Black students equate "working hard to get good grades in school" (186) with acting White. Fordham and Ogbu's thesis is based on a study with only thirty-three students, and it gained an inordinate amount of media attention.

The idea that Black students do not do well in school because they have anti-school attitudes was widely accepted and publicized because it resonated with the popular belief that Black people do not value education. However, a series of subsequent studies have shown that it is simply not true that Black students consciously underachieve or equate academic success with acting white. For example, using a nationally representative sample of nearly 17,000 students, James Ainsworth-Darnell and Douglas Downey (1998) found that Black students had more positive attitudes toward school than White students. They also found that Black students reported being more popular when they did better in school, refuting the claim that Black students experience peer pressure to reject school. They did not find support for the claim that Black students perceive lower returns from education than White students; instead, Black students were more likely than White students to agree with the statement that education is important to getting a job.

In a qualitative study of seventy-two Black students from the southeastern part of the United States, Karolyn Tyson (2002) found that Black third- and fourth-graders were consistently very excited about school and about learning. In her study, students were proud when they excelled and disappointed when they got answers wrong or were not allowed to participate in classroom activities. Instead of experiencing high achievement as a burden, as Fordham and Ogbu (1986) have argued, Tyson (2002, 1174) found that Black youth experienced a "burden of low achievement," in which they felt emotional distress when they did not do well.

In a national study of over 6,000 high school students that compared college-going behaviors by race, Blake (2018) found that, once we consider socioeconomic status and school-related variables, Black students are the most likely to take the ACT/SAT, contact school sources about college, and submit college applications. Blake's (2018) analyses revealed that Black students not only actively pursue college at higher rates than White students, but they also follow through and attend college at higher rates when academic performance is accounted for. Blake's

findings push back against the claim that Black students are not interested in doing well in school because excellent performance is associated with “acting White.”

Tracking

Even when schools are supposedly integrated, there is often internal segregation. In her well-known book titled *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, Beverly Daniel Tatum (2003) provides many answers to this question. One response is that schools are internally segregated, with White students being the most likely to be in the more advanced classes. When children are in different classes, it is not surprising that they do not spend time together during social hours.

Why are schools often internally segregated?

From elementary to high school, students in U.S. schools are placed in different classes based on ability groups, or “tracks.” Many studies have found that non-White children are more likely to be placed in low-ability

groups, beginning in elementary school, whereas White children are more likely to be placed in college-bound tracks in high school. Kao and Thompson (2003) discuss data from 1997 which reveals that nearly half of White people and Asians were in college preparatory tracks, compared with about a third of Latinx and Asian students and less than a quarter of Native American students. Another study, based on 1998 data, found that White students were twice as likely to be in advanced mathematics courses as Black people were. This study, however, found that the differences could be explained by accounting for test scores, grades, prior track placement, and socioeconomic status (Kelly 2009). A more recent nationally representative study found that African Americans and Latinx people were underrepresented in advanced sophomore math classes in a large number of schools. Moreover, Black and Latinx students at those schools had lower average GPAs and rates of university enrollment (Muller et al. 2010).

In addition to within-school differences, there are also disparities between schools. Schools that are predominantly White are more likely to have advanced placement (AP) classes than primarily Black and Latinx schools. The different opportunities that Black, Latinx, and Native American students have to take advanced classes have important impacts on their overall academic achievement and college success rates (Kao and Thompson 2003).

Schools that are predominantly White are more likely to have advanced placement (AP) classes than primarily Black and Latinx schools.

Social and Cultural Capital and Schooling

Sociologists of education also often turn to social and cultural capital as explanations for the achievement gap. **Social capital** refers to relationships and networks, whereas **cultural capital** describes available cultural resources. Put simply, social capital is *who* you know, whereas cultural capital is *what* you know. Students who know many people who have had educational success—parents, uncles, aunts, and cousins with college degrees—will have more information and resources at their disposal than students whose social networks primarily include high school dropouts or people with no schooling at all. This social capital will play a role in a student's ability to succeed. In a similar fashion, students with access to dominant cultural capital—the norms, values, and

cultural knowledge of the school—will have more chances for success than students whose families are not part of the dominant culture.

Based on their research with Mexican-origin students in the Bay Area, sociologists Ricardo Stanton-Salazar and Sanford M. Dornbusch (1995) argue that to be successful in school, adolescents require supportive ties with institutional agents. An **institutional agent** is a person who occupies a position of power and is able to access or negotiate resources for students. These institutional agents can be family or community members as well as school personnel. An institutional agent can be a high school counselor who helps a student obtain financial aid, an alumnus of a local college who serves as a mentor to a student and helps him or her fill out college applications, or a high school teacher who writes a college recommendation for a student. These institutional agents constitute a form of social capital that permits students to reach their educational goals. Working-class youth have less of this necessary form of social capital, which makes reaching their educational goals more difficult.

Most schools in the United States make some effort to recognize the multicultural nature of the nation. Nevertheless, people whose culture and experiences are part of the dominant culture are in charge of most schools. Children whose families are part of the dominant culture thus have an inherent advantage, as they do not have to learn the codes and norms of the dominant culture to be successful in school. Moreover, the school does not devalue their experiences and culture.

The concept of cultural capital draws from the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984), who argued that the dominant group in a society makes its preferences, tastes, and norms appear to be superior to those of the nondominant group. He describes the power of the dominant group to do this as **symbolic violence**, as the dominant group creates a context in which the norms, values, and tastes of other groups are labeled as inferior. An example of this symbolic violence in the United States is the idea that the standard form of English spoken by middle-class White Americans is an indication of intelligence and eloquence, whereas the

forms of English that working-class African Americans speak to one another is an indication of ignorance. The dominant group—middle-class White people—sets the standards.

What all this means for education is that children who grow up in homes where Standard English is spoken can speak this language in school and receive praise for their intelligence and eloquence. Meanwhile, children raised in homes where other forms of English or other languages are spoken must learn new languages and accents in school, and their teachers may tell them not to speak the way their parents do at home. The act of telling children that the way their parents speak is inferior and unacceptable in a school environment can amount to symbolic violence.

Scholars such as Michèle Lamont and Annette Lareau (1988, 164) define cultural capital as "widely shared, legitimate culture made up of high-status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, behaviors, and goods) used in direct or indirect social and cultural exclusion." Other scholars, however, contend that all people have cultural capital, not solely those who belong to the dominant group. Sociologist Prudence Carter (2003) explains that nondominant cultural capital refers to those cultural resources and tastes that people who do not belong to the dominant group use to gain authenticity as a member of their group. For example, African American youth may use nondominant cultural capital such as knowledge of the latest underground hip-hop music to signify their cultural authenticity. In this way, nondominant cultural capital also has an instrumental use—even though that use may not benefit the youth very much in terms of dominant society.

In a 2003 study, Prudence Carter interviewed African American youth in New York, who explained to her that they used different ways of talking at home and at school because they knew that speaking Standard English would be valued in a school setting. Carter's interviewees pointed to dress, musical, and speech styles as the most salient cultural indicators of what it means to be authentically Black. Carter, however, found there was a certain amount of tension involved in these students' navigation of their

home and school identities. Students told her they could easily navigate the different cultural markers and language of the two environments. However, in some cases, the youth "sensed that their cultural presentations of selves negatively influenced teachers' evaluations" (150). Black youth who wish to maintain cultural authenticity have to work hard to maintain an appropriate balance. However, middle-class White youth whose families and communities value dominant cultural capital do not have to worry about this balancing act. As Carter explains, the Black youth she worked with

> *perceived that teachers evaluated them as deficient based on the teachers' and the schools' standards of cultural decorum. They understood that most White people with whom they came into contact used Standard English primarily, the language that facilitates success in U.S. schools (although it is not a sufficient condition by itself). At the same time, they did not believe their own speech styles to be incompatible with school success. (151)*

Although most teachers have good intentions, the reality is that teachers are members of our society and, like all of us, they are inundated with media images that reinforce stereotypes. The prevalence of stereotypes about Black people and criminality, for example, influences how teachers respond to Black boys who misbehave. This, in turn, affects Black boys' schooling outcomes. Ann Arnett Ferguson (2001) offers a poignant example from a school in California where a White teacher compared Black children who didn't return library books to "looters." Instead of seeing the children as careless or forgetful, the teacher resorted to racialized stereotypes of Black men as thieves. Ferguson argues that cultural representations of Black men as criminals serve to **adultify** Black boys in the eyes of teachers. Thus, instead of seeing Black boys as "just being boys" when they misbehave, teachers were inclined to say things such as "that boy has a jail cell with his name on it."

VOICES

Andrew Yang's Problematic Reinforcement of the Model Minority Myth

by Jenn Fang

Tonight, Silicon Valley entrepreneur Andrew Yang joined the nine other top Democratic presidential candidates on the debate stage at Texas Southern University. A noteworthy moment for Asian Americans, Yang remains one of the first Asian Americans in history to run a national campaign for the presidency.

That's why it is all the more problematic that Yang routinely leans upon Model Minority stereotypes of Asian Americans to advance his candidacy. As early as last year, Yang routinely framed himself as qualified to be president because he is a "smart Asian" who is "good at math"—a classic Model Minority trope reminiscent of the infamous *Time* magazine cover that popularized model minority stereotypes for a generation of Americans. Tonight, Yang invoked a different facet of the Model Minority Myth when he quipped in response to a question on…. Model minority stereotypes of Asian Americans first crystalized in 1966 with sociologist William Petersen's article "Success Story, Japanese-American style", published in *The New York Times*. In his article, Petersen explicitly contrasted high-achieving, persevering, and "law-abiding" Japanese Americans against those he labeled to be "problem minorities"—that is, Black people fighting for civil rights in response to historic oppression. Later articles by other writers similarly profiled other "successful" Asian American groups, birthing the modern "Model Minority" stereotype of Asian Americans.

Today, the Model Minority Myth has changed little from the 1960's when it arose as direct repudiation of Black liberation efforts. Asian Americans are touted as wealthy, highly-educated, and hard-working success stories—a testament to how our system selectively rewards well-behaved model minorities at the expense of those

Petersen described as “problem minorities.” The Myth pits communities of colour against one another, suggests we ignore the scars of systemic racism, and encourages us to bootstrap our way into racial acceptance—as if that were even possible.

Model minority stereotypes are not fun, good-natured flattery. They are ugly, demeaning, racist caricatures that co-opt the Asian American identity into the service of assaulting Black civil rights.

The Model Minority Myth is, of course, based on a myth. Time and time again, proponents of the Myths will rechristen themselves amateur sociologists to declare that the Myth is based in fact. Asian Americans actually *are* smarter, they declare. We actually *are* all doctors. We actually all *do* love math.

Certainly, there are some Asian Americans who may embody characteristics consistent with model minority stereotypes. In any community, there will be smart folks, nerdy folks, apolitical folks, and folks who like math. The problem is not that these folks exist, but that when it comes to Asian Americans, the Model Minority Myth asserts these individuals to be meek, intelligent, and industrious *because* they are Asian.

Model minority stereotypes obscure the real diversity of the Asian American community. Whereas some Asian Americans enjoy above-average median household incomes and better access to higher education, they are a subset of Asian Americans and it is concerning and unhelpful to consider them representative of the community as a whole.

Every time the Model Minority Myth is misrepresented as fact, we render invisible the real facts about Asian Americans. We fail to see the staggering wealth gap among Asian Americans which leaves more than 10 percent of Asian Americans living below the poverty line. We ignore evidence that the poverty rate is several times higher for some Asian American ethnic groups, whose members also struggle with far reduced access to college…. The Model Minority Myth hurts Asian Americans because it erases the many ways in which some Asian Americans struggle, and how they

depend on public assistance to survive. The perniciousness of the Model Minority Myth has cemented decades of Asian American marginalization in conversations of who gets—and who deserves—social services and civil rights…. We deserve, at the very least, an Asian American presidential candidate who is up-to-date with the current discourse around the Model Minority Myth's inherent racism—a discourse that most anti-racist Asian Americans are already familiar with. We deserve, at the very least, a candidate who has the pulse of Asian American identity politics; not one who sees anti-Asian stereotypes as a chance to grab a cheap punchline.

Again, I have to wonder: if Yang is joking, who's laughing?

Source: Fang 2019

Hidden Curricula and the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Schools are sites of socialization and learning: students learn to become members of society and develop the skills necessary to be successful. The official curricula of schools include subjects such as math, science, history, and, increasingly, test-taking skills. Schools are also meant to function as sorting mechanisms: students who work hard and perform well will become the future leaders of society. Some education scholars argue that there is also a **hidden curriculum**, in that the school curriculum is designed to reflect the cultural hegemony and ensure the class interests of the dominant group. From this perspective, schools also function as sorting mechanisms, but not in a meritocratic fashion. Instead, schools reproduce the status quo.

One of the ways that schools reproduce racial inequality is through rules and punishment. Students are evaluated not only on their achievement, but also on their ability to conform to rules. Punishment for rule breaking becomes a mechanism of social differentiation and normalization. The

disciplinary techniques used by schools label children as “good,” “bad,” “gifted,” and “troublemakers,” and children are judged on their ability to conform to school rules (Ferguson 2001, 52).

In her book *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*, Ann Arnett Ferguson argues that teachers are more likely to interpret the behavior of African American boys as defiant or inappropriately expressive (2001). As a result of this interpretation and labeling, these students are more likely to receive punishment. There is a certain circularity here: since punishment often involves exclusion from the classroom, these students fall further behind.

This circularity is a crucial part of what some scholars call the **school-to-prison pipeline**—a set of practices that leads to children being funneled from public schools into the juvenile and criminal justice system. Factors contributing to this pipeline include a rise in suspension rates across the country and increased policing of and arrests within schools. These practices build up over the course of a child’s educational career and have harmful effects on Black and Native American youth in particular. Across all age groups, starting with preschool, Black students are three times more likely than White students to be suspended from school, and Native American students, twice as likely. Relatedly, Black and Native American students are also twice as likely as other students to be subject to school-related arrests (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2014).

RESEARCH FOCUS

The Asian American Achievement Paradox

In a 2015 book, Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou explored the factors that have led to Asian American educational success in the United States. One of the factors they focus on is the *hyperselectivity* of Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants—a pattern whereby these immigrants have much higher rates of educational attainment than the general population in their countries of origin. In China, for example, only about 4 percent of adults hold a bachelor's degree or higher. In contrast, 50 percent of Chinese immigrants to the United States hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Chinese immigration to the United States is thus hyperselective in terms of college education.

Moreover, more than half of college-educated immigrants have an advanced degree such as a master's or a doctorate, making Chinese immigrants far more educated than those who do not emigrate. The numbers are not as stark for Vietnamese, although they are still quite remarkable. Whereas only 5 percent of people in Vietnam have college degrees, 23 percent of Vietnamese immigrants in the United States have college degrees. Both Chinese and Vietnamese immigration is highly selective.

Selectivity works very differently in the case of Mexicans. People in Mexico are much more likely to have college degrees than people in China—17 percent versus 4 percent. Only 5 percent of Mexican immigrants to the United States, however, have bachelor's degrees or higher. For Mexican immigrants, then, we witness negative educational selectivity, when compared with the general population in Mexico.

In addition to positive educational selectivity, Vietnamese immigrants to the United States have received assistance from the United States government due to their designation as refugees. Whereas Mexican immigrants are often ineligible for welfare,

Vietnamese refugees received cash and other forms of assistance from the government to assist them in getting settled.

The children of Chinese, Vietnamese, and Mexican immigrants have different educational outcomes in part due to the different circumstances they confront in the United States. Over half of the children of Mexican immigrants have a parent who lacks a high school diploma, compared with only 6 percent of their Chinese and 12 percent of their Vietnamese counterparts.

As Lee and Zhou point out, the children of Mexican immigrants in their study nevertheless achieved tremendous *intergenerational* mobility. Even though more than half of their parents did not graduate from college, only 14 percent of the children dropped out of high school. Moreover, the children of Mexican immigrants in their study had a college graduation rate of 18 percent, which is three times that of their parents. In contrast, the college completion rate of the Chinese children of immigrants in their study is only slightly higher than that of their parents.

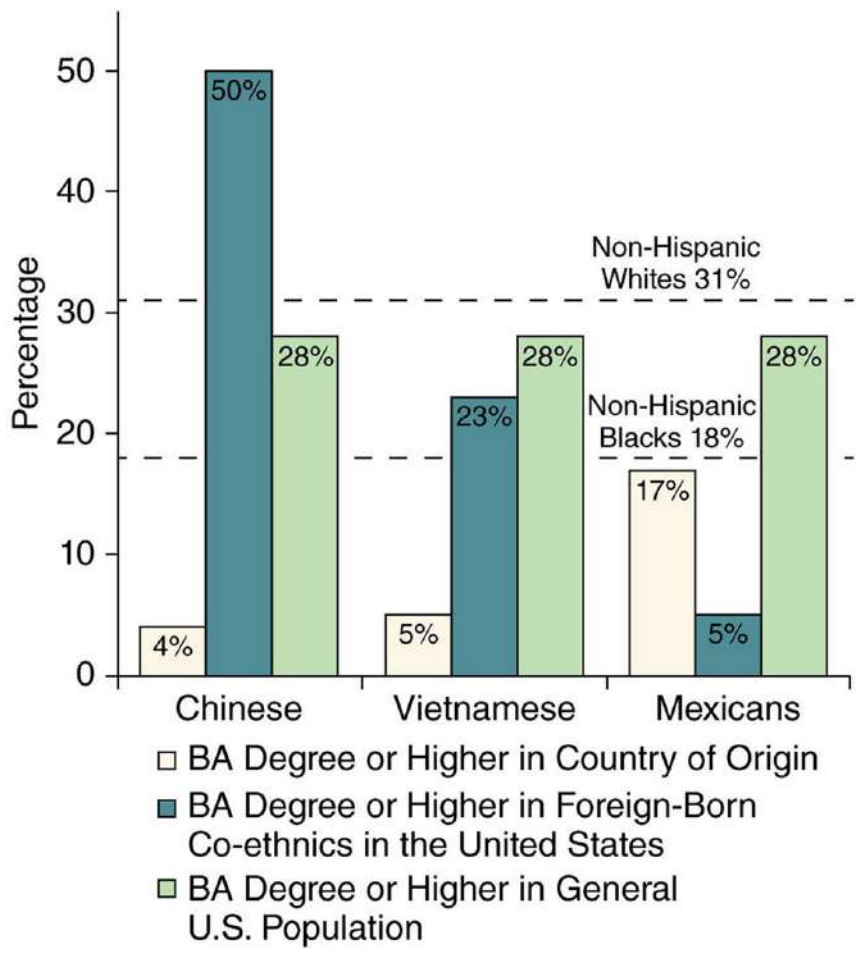


FIGURE RF 8.1 Immigrant Selectivity: Chinese, Vietnamese, and Mexican Immigrants Age 25 or Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

For Discussion

1. What is hyperselectivity, and how does it relate to patterns of Chinese migration?
2. Why do Lee and Zhou argue that the children of Mexican immigrants experience higher rates of intergenerational mobility than the children of Chinese immigrants?

Source: Lee and Zhou 2015.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 8.3: The Achievement Gap: Sociological Explanations for Persistent Inequality

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In the United States, one-third of adults over the age of twenty-five have a bachelor's degree. With the changing labor market and growing inequality, postsecondary education has become increasingly important. An individual's opportunities for financial stability increasingly depend on completing college.

In this chapter, we have explored the various dimensions of educational inequality. There are many sociological explanations for why Native Americans, Latinx people, and African Americans are less likely than White adults to have a college degree. Some of these reasons are historical; the parents of many people of color did not have college degrees because of extreme barriers to higher education in the past. There are also socioeconomic explanations. For example, it is more difficult to attend college if you are in a financially precarious situation, and White people have, on average, higher incomes than other groups. There are also structural and cultural explanations for racial disparities in educational outcomes.

What do we do with all of this information? Many fantastic public schools across the country continue to be primarily or exclusively White. Meanwhile, there are vastly under-resourced and even dangerous schools that primarily serve Black, Latinx, and Native American youth. What does it say about us as a nation that we do not give truly equal opportunities to children from disadvantaged backgrounds?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 8.4: Conclusion and Discussion

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

8.1 What are the dimensions of racial inequality in our educational system?

- The United States has a long history of educational inequality. In the early twentieth century, Native American, African American, and Mexican American children were relegated to separate and inferior schools. Segregation was outlawed in 1954, yet it has produced lingering effects.

Review

» How has educational attainment across racial and ethnic groups changed over time?

» What are Indian schools, and what were the conditions like in those schools?

» On what basis could plaintiffs in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case argue that schools were not "separate but equal"?

» Why did it take so long for schools to become integrated after the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision?

Critical Thinking

» What are some lingering effects of forced school segregation?

» How might the concept of intergenerational trauma help us to understand racial inequalities today?

8.2 How important is the historical legacy of unequal educational opportunities?

- Asian American and White students tend to do better on tests, have higher GPAs, and have higher rates of college completion than African American, Native American, and Latinx students.

Review

» What is the relationship between school segregation and poverty?

» Why have schools begun to resegregate since 1991?

Critical Thinking

» Why is there so much variation in the educational success rates between Asian American students of different nationalities?

8.3 How can we explain the continuing gap in the educational achievements of White, Asian, Black, Native American, and Latinx students?

- Sociologists offer several explanations for disparate educational outcomes, including oppositional culture explanations, tracking, social and cultural capital, and hidden curricula.

Review

» Give examples of the theoretical explanations sociologists offer for the achievement gap.

» What is the difference between social and cultural capital? How are social and cultural capital related to educational success?

Critical Thinking

- Explain and reflect on the tension some youth face between maintaining cultural authenticity and being perceived as serious students. How much does this resonate with your personal experience?
- How do racial ideologies play a role in reproducing racial inequalities within the school system? Specify which racial ideologies you are referring to and how they are connected to inequality.
- Which explanation for the achievement gap do you find most convincing? Why?
- To what extent do you think that Black children do less well in school than White children because of the desire not to be perceived as “acting White”? On what empirical basis do you make your arguments?
- How are social and cultural capital important for school success? Can you reflect on the importance of social and cultural capital in your own educational experiences?

Talking about Race

Imagine someone said to you that Asians are naturally gifted at math. Based on what you have read in this chapter, what are some ways you could respond to such a statement? Could you talk about the variation in Asian American rates of success? Could you talk about hyperselectivity? What other factors do you think can help us unravel the model minority myth?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 8.5: Check Your Understanding

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

LIST OF KEY TERMS

achievement gap

acting White

adultify

affirmative action

cultural capital

hidden curriculum

institutional agent

“model minority” myth

oppositional culture

school-to-prison pipeline

Social capital

symbolic violence

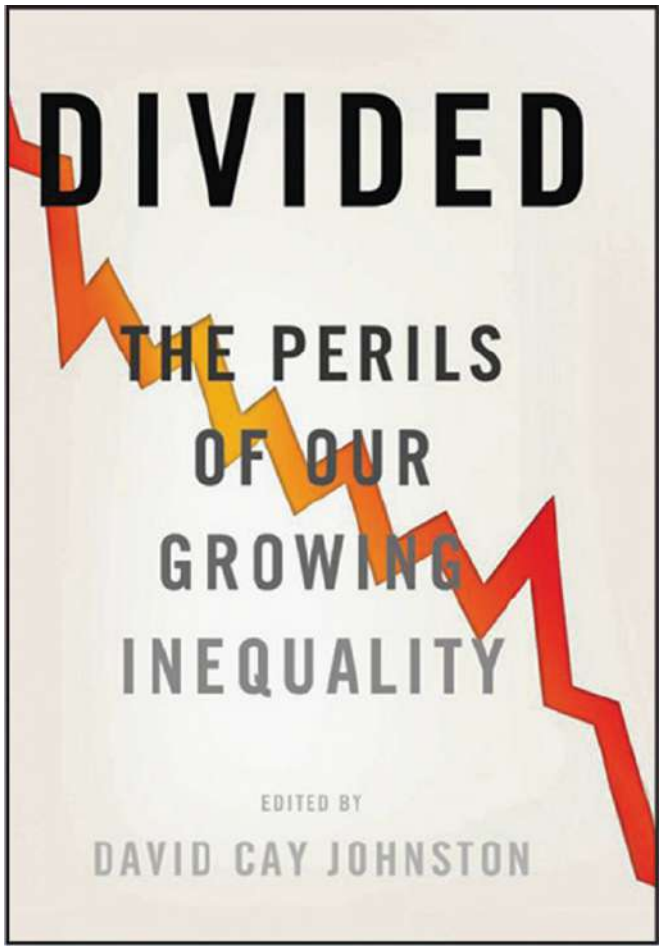
9
Income and Labor Market Inequality

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

The Female Workers Were the Last to Arrive North (The Migration Series, Panel No. 57). Jacob Lawrence. 1940–1941. Casein tempera on hardboard. (*The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., USA/Acquired 1942/Bridgeman Images*)

As You Read

- **9.1** What is the extent of income inequality, and how does it vary by race, ethnicity, and gender?
- **9.2** What are some dimensions of labor market inequality?
- **9.3** How do sociologists explain labor market inequality?
- **9.4** Can affirmative action be an appropriate remedy for labor market discrimination?
- **9.5** What is the relationship between self-employment and labor market inequality?



In the following excerpt from *Divided: The Perils of Our Growing Inequality*, journalist David Cay Johnston describes the contours of increasing inequality in the United States. Whereas average wages have stagnated and even decreased, income at the top has grown exponentially.

From the end of World War II until the early 1970s, the vast majority of Americans enjoyed steadily improving lives. Wages increased and a growing share of workers benefited from steady employment with fringe benefits such as health care, paid vacations, and pensions. The number of jobs grew steadily, especially for work requiring a college education or advanced degrees, as taxpayer investments in basic research produced tangible products and life-extending services. Many more people became home owners, often finding that their monthly outlay was less than

when they rented. Poverty remained a problem, but it was in decline, especially for older Americans. For most families with children one income was enough. Americans had debts, but they grew in tandem with the economy. Cars were typically bought on three-year loans, not the five-, six-, and seven-year loans common today. The real income reported on federal tax returns by the vast majority of Americans, the 90 percent, doubled between the end of the war and 1973.

Then the lives of the vast majority stopped getting better and, after a few years, began a long and painful slide backward. Unions dwindled, shifting the power to set pay from organized groups of workers with advice from market experts to individual employees negotiating, or more often just accepting, pay set by employers. The rising costs of health care diverted more compensation from cash wages to insurance premiums. Trade rules that often favored other nations destroyed many well-paying manufacturing jobs, including more than 50,000 factories and 2.8 million jobs offshored to China.

As a result, the vast majority's average income rose above the 1973 level only four times—1999, 2000, 2001, and 2007—and even then added only the equivalent of one additional week's income to each year. By 2012 the average income of the vast majority had shrunk to the equivalent of 45 weeks of 1973 income—a 13 percent decline to $30,997 from $35,584 in 1973, expressed in 2012 dollars.

Between 1998 and 2011, the median weekly wage—half make more, half less—stagnated between $533 and $546 in 2012 dollars, then dropped in 2012 to $529 and change, or $27,519 for the year. Almost a third of the 153.6 million Americans with a job at any time in 2012 made less than $15,000, averaging just $6,100.

In recent years nearly all of the income growth has been in jobs paying more than $75,000—about one in every eight jobs. At the top, pay soared. In 2012 the number of people whose jobs paid cash wages of $5 million or more grew by 27 percent to 8,982 workers while their inflation-adjusted combined pay increased by 40 percent over 2011.

While the average income of the vast majority in 2012 fell back to the level of 1966 (actually, $9 less than in 1966), the news got only better for the top 1 percent. They saw their average incomes rise from nearly $441,000 to $1,264,000, a real increase that nearly tripled their pretax incomes. At the very, very top, the news was nothing short of fantastic. The top 1 percent of the top 1 percent, or one in every 10,000 households, saw their average income skyrocket from $5.4 million in 1966 to almost $30.8 million in 2012. That means that for every $1 in 1966 income, each household at the top reported $5.67 in 2012. Most of these are not the same people, but the figures tell us how, as a group, America rewarded its wealthiest, while the vast majority (also not the same people, forty-six years later) saw their incomes wither.

Meanwhile, poverty is worsening. Among developed countries only Romania has a larger share of its children in poverty. In any recent year, more than one in five American children lived in a home without enough food for everyone at all times. Black and Hispanic children are five times more likely than children overall to live in households with what our government euphemistically calls “very low food security.” Food banks report that their shelves often go bare before the lines of people are served and that most of their new customers since 2008 are married couples with children who used to have two jobs and now have none. To people accustomed to a pantry full of food and a refrigerator with not enough shelf space for everything that comes home

> from the grocery store, this may be hard to grasp. Yet one in every fifty-two people you meet today, statistically, has no income except food stamps.
>
> *Source: Johnston 2015.*

In *Divided*, Johnston (2015) considers the rise of income inequality in the United States. After World War II, quality of life for those in the working and middle classes improved each year until 1973, when average income began to fall. Meanwhile, the income of the upper classes began to skyrocket. Today, the United States is one of the most unequal countries in the Western Hemisphere. Moreover, inequality is mapped along race and gender lines, with African Americans and Latinx people earning substantially less than White people. We see this racial inequality not just in income but also in the labor market as a whole. In this chapter, we will take a closer look at income and labor market inequality and develop a deeper understanding of racial inequality in the United States today.

Studies of labor market discrimination and income inequality clearly show that men earn more than women and that White workers earn more than non-White workers, even accounting for differences in education, skills, years on the job, and productivity (Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009; Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce 2019). Why are employers willing to pay a premium for White male workers? In a capitalist society, it seems logical that employers would seek out the best workers they can hire for the lowest price. Yet the evidence suggests that employers routinely pass over highly qualified Black and Latinx candidates and offer raises and promotions to White candidates (Pager and Shepherd 2008). Why are employers less likely to hire Black and Latinx candidates? Why are highly qualified Asian American, Black, and Latinx employees often paid less than their White counterparts? Why, if Black men are paid less than White men, are they more likely to be unemployed?

Income Inequality by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

Before delving into inequalities among racial and ethnic groups, it important to note that in the United States, the difference in earnings between the richest and the poorest people has widened over the past few decades. Income inequality among Americans has increased in large part because of tremendous growth in the incomes of the highest earners and stagnation or decline in the incomes of the lowest earners. Although the median national household income was about $64,500 in 2000, which was 60 percent more than it had been in 1980 (in constant 2014 dollars), the median income of the bottom 50 percent of earners was only $16,000—the same as it was in 1980. By 2014, the top 50 percent of earners were taking in 88 percent of all income, up from about 80 percent in 1980. The top 1 percent alone took in 20 percent of all income. In fact, the average income of the top 1 percent rose from $420,000 in 1980 to $1.3 million in 2014—81 times more than the average income of the bottom 50 percent (Piketty, Saez, and Zucman 2016). By 2018, the top 10 percent of earners in the United States were earning 12.6 times that of the bottom 10 percent—up from 9.1 times in 1980 (Pew Research Center 2020).

With the Washington Monument in the background, activists stand in place to form a "99%," part of Occupy DC activities in 2011 to protest income and wealth inequality.

You may recall the slogans of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement referring to this income (and wealth) disparity, such as "We are the 99%." Tensions over inequality in the United States have risen in recent years in response to rising inequality. The United States has become one of the most unequal advanced economies in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.48. The **Gini coefficient** is a measure from 0 to 1, with 0 representing perfect equality (i.e., everyone earning the same amount) and 1 representing perfect inequality (i.e., a single person having all the earnings) (United States Census 2019). The high level of inequality in the U.S. is problematic both because it means that the United States has an increasingly large poor population and because inequality is related to a host of health and social problems, including high rates of low birth weight, homicide, mental illness, and violent crime (Wilkinson and

Pickett 2009). Among the thirty-five member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, the Gini coefficient for the United States is the fourth highest, after Turkey, Mexico, and Chile (Figure 9-1). The U.S. has higher inequality than the other thirty-one countries—including Australia, Germany, Sweden, and Iceland. The Slovak Republic has the lowest Gini coefficient—at .241 in 2016 (OECD 2021).

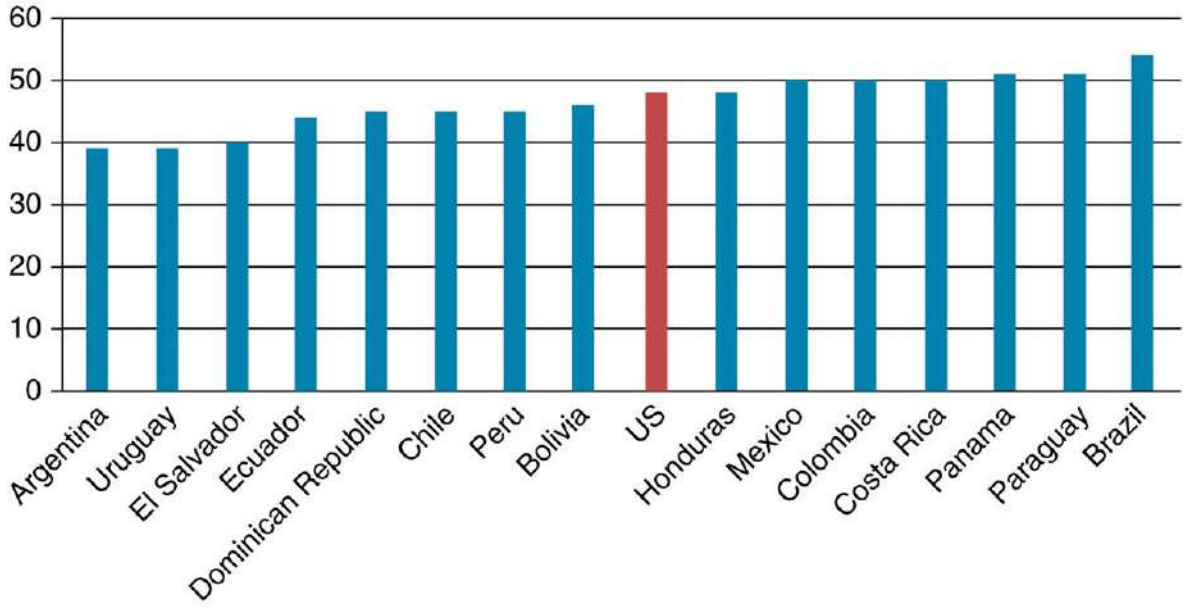
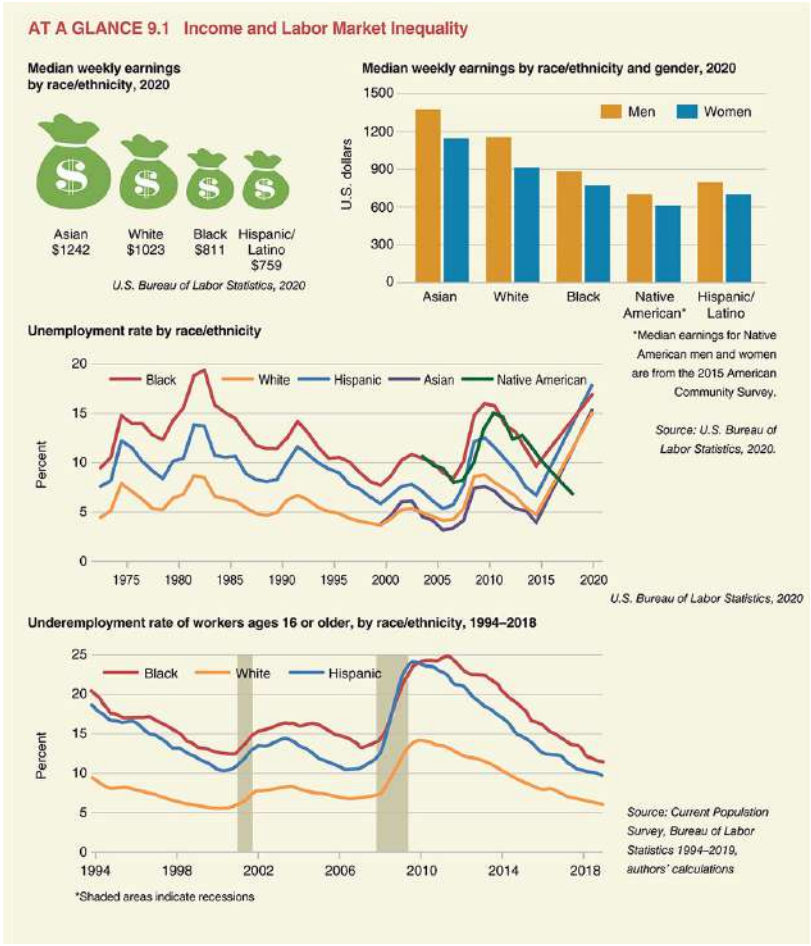


FIGURE 9-1 Gini Coefficients in the Americas, 2017 Source: United States Census (2019) and Barcena (2019).

Compared with similar nations, the United States is the most unequal on a variety of other measures as well. In addition to having the highest Gini coefficient, it also ranks last in child poverty rates, has the largest ratio between the richest 10 percent and the poorest 10 percent, and has the highest percentage of people living below 50 percent of the median income (Internationalcomparisons.org 2014).

Overall inequality is exacerbated by earnings inequality distributed along racial and ethnic lines. In the United States today, Asians have the highest median earnings, followed by White people and then Black and Latinx people (At a Glance 9.1). The median income of White workers in the

United States has been higher than that of Black workers for as long as we have kept track of income data. Such differences in earnings by group are called the **earnings gap**. Sociologists provide a wide array of explanations for this gap, and we will go over many of them later in this chapter.



How does income inequality by race and ethnicity further break down by gender? As we see in At a Glance 9.1, the largest difference in income is between Asian men—whose median weekly earnings were $1,383 in 2020—and Latinx women—whose median weekly earnings were $702 per week. We don't have complete data on Native American earnings. However, we do know that only 19 percent of Native Americans earned more than $1,200 per week, as compared to 50 percent of Asians (Allard and Brundage 2019).

In addition to the earnings gap, sociologists have identified a **wage gap**, which refers to differences in hourly earnings among groups. Whereas the earnings gap refers to overall income regardless of hours worked, the wage gap refers only to the difference in the amount earned per hour worked. To understand earnings and wage gaps by group, we need to account for broader forces at work in the labor market.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 9.1: Income Inequality by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Dimensions of Racial Disparities in the Labor Market

Disparities in earnings and wages are tied to many facets of the labor market, including unemployment rates, promotion practices, and employment stability. For example, Black women are at a higher risk of unemployment than White women, meaning they are even more economically disadvantaged than the wage gap suggests (Pettit and Ewert 2009).

Is it harder for people from some racial or ethnic groups to obtain jobs? Are some groups less likely to be promoted? Are some groups less likely to be in stable employment? All of these factors are relevant to understanding the extent of labor market disparities.

Disparities among Women

First, let's look at how gender plays a role. There is a wage gap between men and women in the United States: women earn, on average, eighty-two cents an hour for each dollar that men earn (Bleiweis 2020). Moreover, earnings differences by gender within and across racial and ethnic groups can be striking. White women earn senty-nine cents for each dollar that White men make. However, Black women make only sixty-two cents for each dollar that White men make, and Native American women only fifty-seven cents (Bleiweis 2020; Figure 9-2). Thus, analyses of racial inequality in the labor market that do not take gender into account provide an incomplete picture (Browne and Misra 2003; Figure 9-3).

FIGURE 9-2 Women's Hourly Earnings on the Dollar versus Men's by Race/Ethnicity Source: Bleiweis (2020).

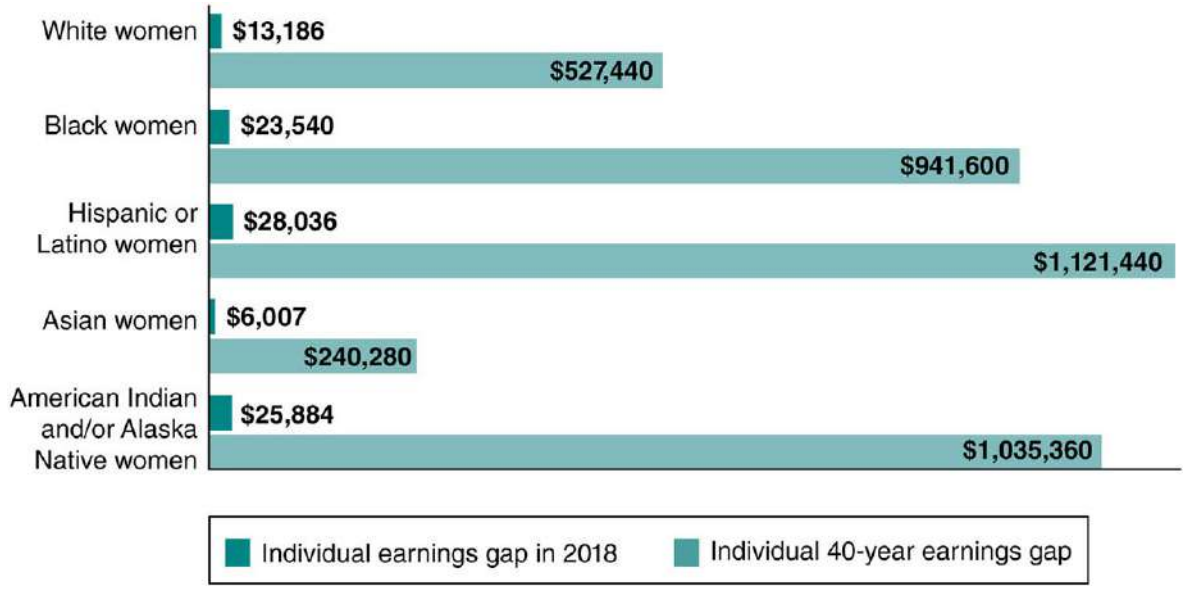


FIGURE 9-3 The Average 2018 Earnings Gap for a Woman Balloons over the Course of Forty Years Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013. http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/wkyeng.pdf

A study by Raine Dozier (2010) helps us understand how labor market forces affect the earnings gap between Black and White women. Her study found that both groups experienced wage gains during the 1980s and 1990s, but White women gained more. Dozier explains that this disparity developed because White and Black women were not equally represented in the job sectors that had the most earnings growth. Between 1980 and 2002, more women entered the labor force and more highly paid

professional positions became available to them. White women were more likely to attain these highly paid positions and thus gain more than their Black counterparts.

Completing college, for most people, leads to higher income. The gains in income vary by race and gender, however. White women who attend college will earn 24.4 percent more in their lifetime than their counterparts who don't attend college, whereas Black men and women will only earn about 19 percent more in their lifetime. When we compare across races, we see different disparities: college-educated White men earn an average of $88,700 per year in retirement, as compared to $69,000 for Black and White women and $64,500 for Black men (Cosic 2019).

Most studies of labor market inequality focus on earnings. In a recent article, Tali, Cohen and Novot (2018) turn their attention to inequalities in employer-provided benefits—which account for 25 percent of total compensation. They found that whereas women overall are more likely to have jobs with benefits such as employer-provided health insurance and retirement accounts, Black and Latinx people are less likely. For example, Hispanic men earned sixty-three cents for every dollar that White men earned, but only forty-eight cents for every dollar that White men obtained in employer-provided benefits. When we take total compensation into account, the earnings gap by race and ethnicity widens.

In the United States, women earn an average of 82 cents for each dollar that men earn. This pay gap was one of the reasons for the 2017 Women's March on Washington.

COVID-19 and Racial Economic Disparities

There is a saying in the Black community: "When America catches a cold, Black people get pneumonia." The economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black Americans were in line with this saying. By April 2020, only 48.8 percent of Black adults were gainfully employed. The labor force participation of Black Americans had not dropped below 50 percent since the early 1980s (Long and Van Dam 2020). In the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly one in five Black and Latinx people experienced food and housing insecurity, and over half had lost income since March 2020 (Long and Van Dam 2020; Figure 9-4).

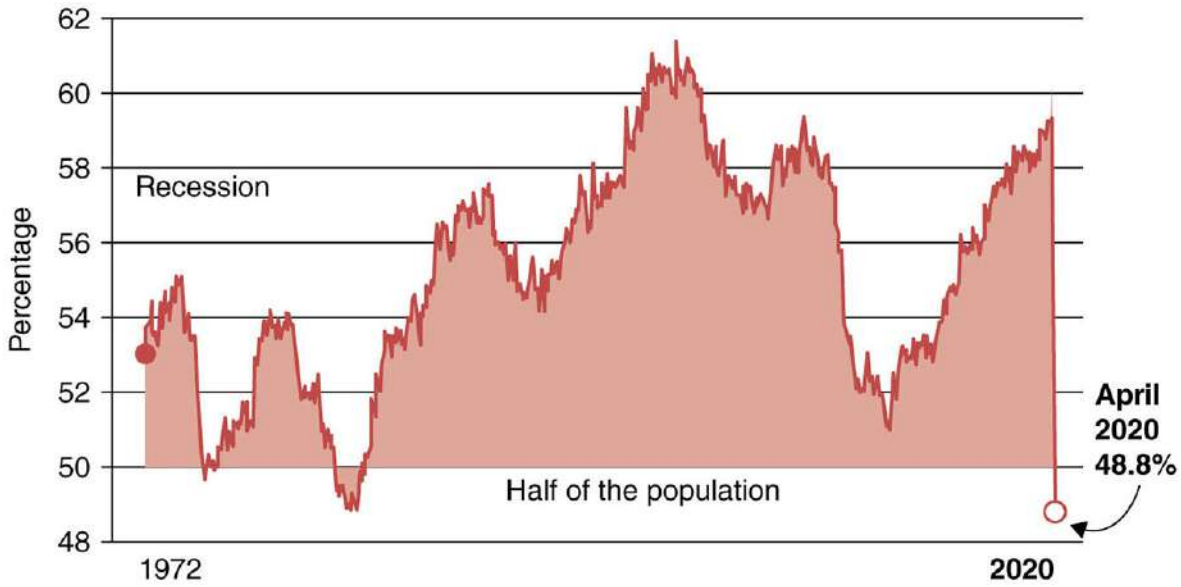


FIGURE 9-4 U.S. Black Employment as a Share of the Black Adult Population
Source: Long and Van Dam (2020).

Black Americans were particularly hard hit by the economic crisis caused by COVID-19 because of their precarious economic position at the start of the pandemic. Figure 9-5 shows how the median income of all racial groups fell between 2000 and 2011. During the economic recovery between 2011 and 2018, income rose for all groups. However, whereas income for White and Latinx people rose well above the medians from 2000, Black Americans, on average, were doing worse in 2018 than they were in 2000. By 2018, the median income for White people was $70,642, for Latinx people it was $51,450, and for Black people it was $41,361 (Long and Van Dam 2020; Figure 9-5).

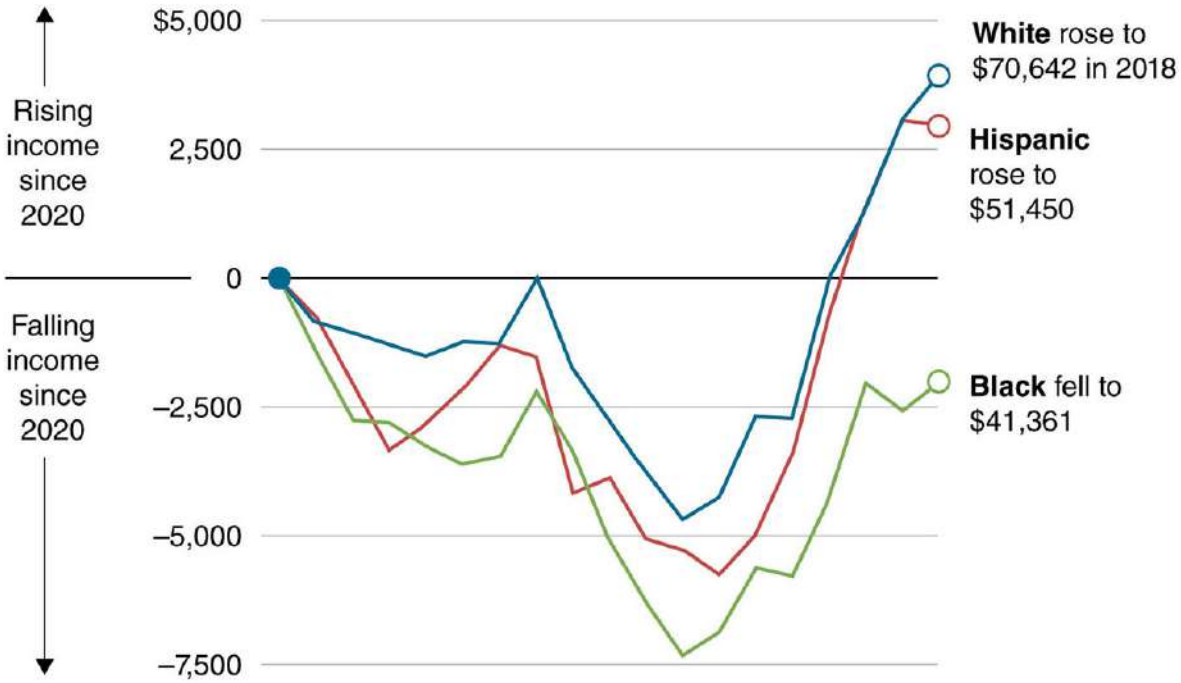


FIGURE 9-5 Change in Median Income Since the Year 2000, Adjusted for Inflation Source: Long and Van Dam (2020).

Disparities among Asian Americans

Given the tremendous diversity within the Asian American population, it can be helpful to break these groups down by national origin when analyzing economic disparities. There is a lot of variation in household income among Asian Americans of different national origins (Figure 9-6). Whereas the average annual household income for Indians in 2015 was $100,000, it was only $48,000 for Hmong households.

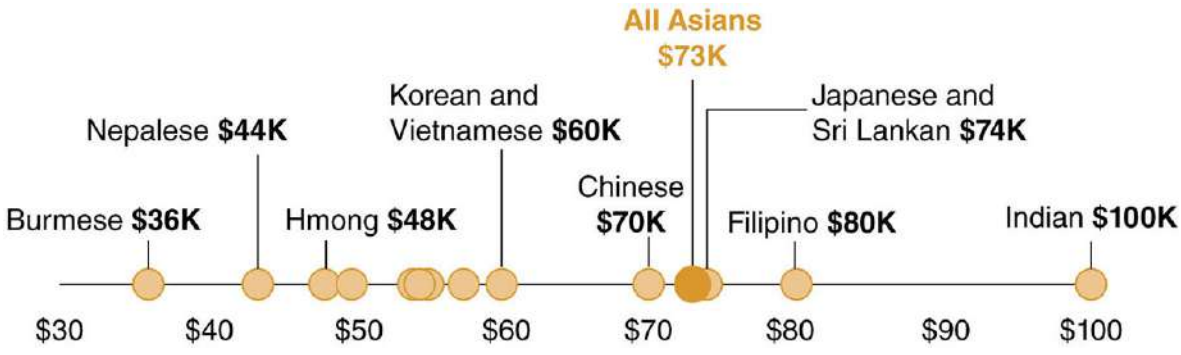


FIGURE 9-6 Median Annual Household Income among Asian Americans by National Origin, 2015 Source: Pew Research Center (2019).

In a study using data from the 2000 U.S. census, Emily Greenman and Yu Xie (2008) looked at full-time, year-round workers between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-five. They found that among men, four groups had higher earnings than White men: Chinese Americans, Asian Indians, Korean Americans, and Japanese Americans. However, among women, in addition to those four groups, Cuban women and Filipina women also out-earn their White counterparts. Overall, Greenman and Xie found that White women earn 71 cents for each dollar that White men earn and that White women have the largest gender disadvantage of all of the racial and ethnic groups. Korean women, for example, earned eighty-six cents for each dollar that Korean men earned, and Black and Filipina women earned eighty-four cents for each dollar that their male counterparts earned (Figure 9-7). These results show that it is not the case that race and gender are additive factors in the labor market. Instead, racism and sexism operate in distinct ways for different ethnic and racial groups.

Wage Gaps for Asian American and Pacific Islander Women by Subgroup					
Wage gaps among subgroups of AAPI women compared to white, non-Hispanic and AAPI men					
Self-Reported Ancestry or Ethnicity	**Total Number in the United States**	**Median Wages for Women**	**Annual Wage Gap Compared to White, Non-Hispanic Men**	**Cents-on-the-Dollar versus White, Non-Hispanic Men**	**Cents-on-the-Dollar versus AAPI Men's Wages (Within subgroup)**
Nepalese	167,468	$30,000	$30,000	50	81
Burmese	178,490	$31,000	$29,000	52	103
Fijian	39,103	$33,000	$27,000	55	59
Cambodian	240,379	$34,000	$26,000	57	85
Bangladeshi	203,845	$36,000	$24,000	60	86
Hmong	305,323	$36,800	$23,200	61	97
Samoan	110,606	$37,100	$22,900	62	84
Hawaiian	186,996	$38,000	$22,000	63	95
Guamanian/ Chamorro	104,219	$39,500	$20,500	66	92
Laotian	203,494	$40,000	$20,000	67	100
Thai	218,514	$40,000	$20,000	67	80
Vietnamese	1,862,395	$40,000	$20,000	67	80
Tongan	40,538	$45,000	$15,000	75	125
Indonesian	70,851	$47,300	$12,700	79	79
Filipino	2,920,160	$50,000	$10,000	83	96
Pakistani	487,937	$53,000	$7,000	88	88
Korean	1,468,279	$54,000	$6,000	90	86
Sri Lankan	52,183	$54,000	$6,000	90	68
Japanese	782,776	$55,000	$5,000	92	73
Chinese	4,217,892	$60,000	$0	100	83
Indian	4,161,088	$72,000	–$12,000	120	73
Taiwanese	178,020	$74,000	–$14,000	123	100
Malaysian	20,599	$75,000	–$15,000	125	75

FIGURE 9-7 Wage Gaps for Asian American and Pacific Islander Women by Subgroup

Asian American men have the highest average earnings in the United States. Does this mean they do not face discrimination? Not necessarily. Many sociologists have pointed out that Asians earn more than White people, but that their average earnings should actually be even higher because Asians have higher average educational attainment than White people. Because of how our society is organized, we should expect people with more education to earn more than their less educated counterparts, not the same or less. One study, for example, found that over half of Asians born in the United States complete college, compared with less than a third of White people. Asians are also more likely than other groups to major in areas that have higher pay, such as science and engineering (Kim and Sakamoto 2010).

ChangHwan Kim and Arthur Sakamoto (2010) conducted a study on whether Asian American men experience labor market discrimination. Their study included only men who were college graduates. Thus, it considered labor market discrimination among highly skilled workers. They found that Asian American men who are college graduates do earn more than their White counterparts. However, once you take into account the region where they live, their field of study, and their college type, native-born Asian American men have an 8 percent earnings disadvantage. In other words, if an Asian American man and a White man both live in New York, both went to selective universities, and both studied engineering, we could expect that the Asian man would earn, on average, 8 percent less than the White man. In contrast, Kim and Sakamoto found that Asian American men born abroad who went to school and now work in the United States do not experience a labor market disadvantage relative to White men.

Kim and Sakamoto's 2010 study only included college-educated men. However, in a follow-up study published in 2014, the researchers revealed that Asian American men without a college degree earn substantially less than their White counterparts. Kim and Sakamoto explain that the model-minority myth can have negative effects for Asians who do not achieve a certain level of educational success. The follow-up study showed particularly striking results for Asian American male high school dropouts, who earned significantly less than White male dropouts (Kim and Sakamoto 2014).

Underemployment, Unemployment, and Joblessness

Earnings inequality is compounded by unemployment rates. Earnings data do not factor in unemployed people, who may not be taking home any income. It is thus important to consider the effects of unemployment and underemployment on the bigger picture. These rates vary

significantly by race and ethnicity, as shown in At a Glance 9.1. Since 1970, the unemployment rate for Black people has been about twice that for White people.

Unemployment rates in the United States peaked in April 2020, at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. Unemployment rates for White workers jumped from 3% in February 2020 to 14.1%. By January 2021, unemployment rates for White people were back down to 5.7%. Other groups did not recover so quickly. In this same time period, Black workers experienced a peak of 16.7% and that went down to 9.2%. Asian workers experienced a peak of 14.9% and that went down to 6.6%. Latinx workers experienced a peak of 16.7% and that went down to 7.7%. Notably, in April 2020, one in five Latinas were unemployed (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021). These data show how economic crises often have more severe impacts on some groups than other and that White workers were the first to recover from this unemployment crisis.

Wage differentials in the labor force provide a limited view of overall inequality, as analyses of the earnings gap account only for people who are actually working. Thus, the finding that the earnings gap between White and Black people has decreased since 1980 may not be as promising as it seems in terms of racial equality, as we will see. The Bureau of Labor Statistics counts people as unemployed when they do not have a job and have actively looked for work in the previous month. Insofar as many people do not work and have given up looking for work, the unemployment rate is only one measure of joblessness (University of California Berkeley Labor Center 2013).

The labor market prospects of Black and Latinx workers also look bleak when we take underemployment into account. The **underemployment** category includes jobless workers actively seeking work, people who are working part time yet are available to work full time, and those who have looked for work in the past year yet are not actively seeking employment. In 2017, 15 percent of Latinx workers and 13 percent of Black workers met this definition of underemployed, compared with 8 percent of White

workers. For all workers, these rates had improved since 2010, when 25 percent of Black and Latinx workers and 15 percent of White workers were underemployed (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020) (see At a Glance 9.1). Notably, these disparities are greater in rural areas—where 17 percent of White workers are underemployed, as compared to 23 percent of Latinx workers, and 33 percent of Black workers (Slack, Thiede, and Jensen 2019).

Chapter 9.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

VOICES

Foraging on the Margins of the Labor Market

Finding a job is hard no matter who you are. But some people face more barriers to obtaining employment than others, including racial minorities and those with criminal records who have to "check the box." In the *American Journal of Sociology*, Naomi F. Sugie shows how the latter group of men navigate reentry into labor markets after incarceration.

As part of the Newark SmartPhone Reentry Project, Sugie collected smartphone data from 133 men recently released from prison in Newark, New Jersey. The men were asked to participate for a period of three months, after which they could keep the provided smartphone. Sugie learned that the majority of respondents engaged in "foraging behavior"—taking on short-term jobs in a variety of industries as a way to make ends meet.

Initially, most participants spent about half of their time searching for long-term work, but almost half stopped searching after the first month. But their decreases in job search days were not linked to an increase in working days. Rarely did the men spend more than two days in the same job or even work the same job week to week during the three-month study period. Even those who found relatively consistent work still had less stability than people working Monday-to-Friday jobs. And among the typically older respondents who continued searching after the first month, foraging was necessary to meet day-to-day financial needs.

Workers who forage often lack the social integration and job protection associated with long-term employment. While this study looked at one group on the margins of the labor market, Sugie believes foraging may be prevalent among other groups that struggle to obtain traditional entry into America's workforce.

Source: Drotning 2018

The two million people in the criminal justice system are also mostly outside the labor force, yet they are not included in the official counts of the unemployed either. In 1999, a third of Black men aged twenty-two to thirty were jobless or incarcerated, compared with only 13 percent of their White counterparts (Western and Pettit 2005). As one example of how the incarceration rate affects the jobless rate, we can consider another study by Western and Pettit (2002) that looked at the percentages of Black and White high school dropouts with jobs. The study found that without taking the incarcerated population into account, 50 percent of Black high school dropouts aged twenty-two to thirty had jobs, compared with 80 percent of White high school dropouts. After factoring in the incarcerated population, however, this percentage dropped to less than 30 percent for Black male high school dropouts, compared with over 60 percent for their White counterparts (Western and Pettit 2002).

Western and Pettit (2005) found that the gains in Black men's wages between 1980 and 1999 must be assessed in light of the large numbers of Black men who went to prison and became jobless during that same time period. Incarceration is an important factor in assessing labor market inequality for Black men. If we look at labor market inequality without taking into account incarceration rates, we will have an incomplete picture because large numbers of Black men are effectively taken out of the labor market by imprisonment. As Western and Pettit (2002) explained, when we account for the incarcerated population, less than a third of Black male high school dropouts are employed.

One in three Black men born in the twenty-first century can expect to spend time in prison during his lifetime (Mauer and King 2007). While incarcerated, people are either unemployed or employed at extremely low wages, as the minimum wage does not apply to prison labor. Moreover, the effects of imprisonment endure after incarceration. People who spend time in prison often have trouble finding work once released because of the stigma of a criminal record (Pager 2007). They also are likely to earn less than people who have not been to prison, as their time in prison takes them out of the labor market, preventing them from gaining work

experience during this time. Over a quarter of formerly incarcerated people are unemployed, and these disparities are even starker by race. Whereas 6.4 percent of Black men aged thirty-five to forty-four were unemployed in 2008, 35.2 percent of Black men aged thirty-five to forty-four who had been released from prison in the past four years were unemployed. Formerly incarcerated Black women also faced very high unemployment rates (43.6 percent), as did Latinas (39.4 percent) (Couloute and Kopf 2018).

SELF-ASSESSMENT 9.2: Dimensions of Racial Disparities in the Labor Market

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Sociological Explanations for Income and Labor Market Inequality

One question that arises from these disparities is whether the gaps in earnings and employment are due to differences in human capital, labor market discrimination, or other factors. **Human capital** refers to educational attainment, skills, and job experience. Scholars who study labor market disparities often measure earnings gaps while taking into account human capital differences. The idea is that an individual's earnings should be based on his or her qualifications. If disparities remain once we take into account human capital differences, we can argue that labor market discrimination plays a role in the earnings gap. Studies of the earnings gap consistently show that about 10 to 20 percent of this gap cannot be explained by human capital differences. Sociologists often consider the unexplained gap to be an indicator of labor market discrimination (Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009).

The existence of an earnings gap tells us that labor market discrimination is likely at play. Field research or audit studies provide further evidence of labor market discrimination, particularly in terms of hiring. In these studies (e.g., Pager et al. 2009), researchers send out people with similar qualifications but different racial and ethnic identities to apply for existing jobs to find out if racial identity plays a role in employers' hiring decisions.

The lower earnings of African Americans and Latinx people can be attributed in part to individual factors such as discrimination and lower levels of human capital. But lower earnings are also attributable to structural factors such as changes in the labor market. During the 1980s, for example, wages increased for high-skilled jobs, government sector work declined, many unionized jobs went overseas, and part-time and

temporary work rose. These structural changes affected labor market disparities. Of course, individual and structural factors also work together. For example, Black people have, on average, lower educational attainment than Asian Americans. This disparity has disadvantaged Black people in recent years because of the diminished opportunities for low-skill work that has resulted from outsourcing. This section considers both individual- level and structural explanations for labor market inequality.

Individual-Level Explanations

One way to explain the earnings gap among different racial groups in the United States is on an individual level. Some scholars argue that the earnings gap is due to individual human capital differences—for example, if Asian Americans have higher levels of education than Black Americans, we can expect them to have higher incomes.

Bus drivers in Washington, D.C., have one of the few unionized jobs left in the country.

In 2016, 87.4 percent of Asians, 70.6 percent of Latinx people, 70.5 percent of White people, 56.5 percent of Black people, and 18.8 percent of Native Americans who graduated from high school immediately enrolled in college (Espinosa, Turk, Taylor, and Chessman 2019). Higher levels of education among Asians are part of the reason they earn more than other racial groups. But to what extent does educational attainment explain overall patterns of income inequality?

According to a study published by the federal reserve bank of San Francisco, in 2016 the average Black male worker earned $18 an hour, compared to the average White male worker, who earned $25 an hour. The authors used a statistical method called regression to figure out what factors explain this average difference of $7 per hour, which by the way, adds up to about $14,000 a year. For example, the fact that Black and White men work in different types of jobs accounts for just over $2 of the earnings gap. The fact that White men have higher levels of education accounts for just over $1 of the earnings gap. The differences between Black and White men in age, part-time status, and state of residence account for less than $1.The remaining difference, which amounts to just over $3 per hour is unexplained by differences between Black and White men in age, education, occupation, and other factors relevant to the labor market.

When differences in earnings cannot be explained fully by relevant labor market characteristics such as age, education, or occupation, many scholars argue that the remaining earnings gap can be explained by discrimination. Racial discrimination in the labor market occurs when racial status plays a role in an employer's decision to deny a person a job, promotion, or raise. A survey conducted in 2001 found that more than 33 percent of Black people and nearly 20 percent of Latinx people believed they had experienced labor market discrimination (Schiller 2004). Other studies have found that employers admit they are hesitant to hire Black workers (Pager and Shepherd 2008).

VOICES

Latina Professionals as Racialized Tokens: Lisa's Story

Glenda Flores argues that Latina professionals are "racialized tokens." When they are numerical minorities in White-collar occupations, they experience a series of uncomfortable situations rooted in racial conflict. Flores's work on Latina doctors introduces us to Lisa, a thirty-four-year-old family medicine physician born in El Salvador. Lisa moved to the United States with her family as an infant and settled in the Pico Union District in downtown Los Angeles.

Lisa explained that her college-educated, white-collar parents experienced downward mobility upon arrival. As undocumented immigrants, they found work in the garment industry. Lisa overcame obstacles associated with her parents' low socioeconomic status and earned her medical degree from the University of California at Davis.

Despite experiencing intergenerational upward mobility and securing a prestigious profession that paid over $100,000 a year, Lisa shared that she frequently experienced gendered and racial inequities in her interactions with colleagues and patients, both co-ethnics and non-Latinos. In an interview, Lisa recounted a situation with a white physician:

> *I ended up doing way more [work] than that [white] doctor. That doctor slowed me down because his Spanish was broken and he did not know anything about medical Spanish, which I have been studying. So they were using me to interpret [for him] and I was really mad … I'm like "why am I doing that?" … I am okay doing it but it was just funny that [another] Latino [doctor], a Peruvian guy, was putting him [the white doctor] on a pedestal because he is male, white, and older and I am the opposite.*

Later, Lisa, who had a very slight accent indicative of a native Spanish speaker, explained how racial/ethnic inequality influenced

how patients interacted with her during office visits:

> *There was an intern who was an Asian [male] and had seen this patient. I am understanding it was [an instance rooted in] race because this is what the [white] patient said. … I am talking [to the patient] in English and he is like "I don't understand you. Bring back the Asian doctor. I don't understand you." [I say] "Sir, I am speaking English!" He says, "no but I don't understand your English."… the Caucasian [patients] are the ones that [it has happened with] at least in two situations. It is more race and language because I do have an accent and I realize that but I can communicate.*

While Lisa felt she was culturally competent to aid patients of various social and economic backgrounds, she was aware that her race/ethnicity and gender meant that both physicians and patients undermined her medical expertise, favoring medical interns that held a lesser rank or less competent white doctors over her.

White women also face gender discrimination in male-dominated jobs. However, the experience is different for professional Latinas who encounter gendered racism. Inequality in the professions manifests itself in different ways, and bilingual Latinas working in the "token" context often find themselves doing additional work—such as translations—that others performing the same job are not asked to do.

Source: Glenda Flores, University of California at Irvine.

One way of measuring labor market discrimination is to use statistics to identify systematic disparities between different groups. For example, if we compare the earnings of thirty-five-year-old college-educated White men to similarly situated Black men and find a disparity, we can conclude that labor market discrimination plays a role in the earnings disparity. As previously mentioned, another method for uncovering discrimination involves the use of field experiments or audit studies in which researchers send equally qualified individuals out to apply for jobs and calculate the extent to which race or ethnicity affects employers' hiring practices. Each

of these methodologies has revealed labor market discrimination (Pager and Shepherd 2008).

Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan (2004) conducted an extensive audit study to find out if employers discriminate against African Americans. They created four résumés—two high-skill and two low-skill—to send to over 1,300 job ads in Chicago and Boston. To isolate the effect they were studying, they randomly assigned either an African American–sounding name (such as Lakisha Washington or Jamal Jones) or a White-sounding name (such as Emily Walsh or Greg Baker) to each résumé. They found that applicants with White-sounding names needed to send out about ten résumés to get a callback, whereas applicants with African American–sounding names needed to send about fifteen. This audit study shows that African Americans have a harder time securing interviews that lead to employment than White people in part because employers often prefer White employees. This preference may reflect conscious or unconscious bias.

Researchers who study **implicit bias** explain that we all have biases at a subconscious level. Owing to stereotypes, for example, a potential employer may exhibit bias in evaluating the same résumé from "Lakisha Washington" versus "Emily Walsh" without even being aware.

Chapter 9.2 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

A clear example of implicit bias comes from a study of lawyers. A group of researchers crafted a fictitious legal research memo and asked sixty law firm partners to evaluate the memo. The memo contained seven deliberate spelling and grammatical errors. The partners (which included twenty-three women, thirty-seven men, twenty-one racial/ethnic minorities, and thirty-nine Caucasians) all received the same memo.

However, half were told the author was Black, and the other half were told the author was White. The partners were asked to find the errors in the memo. Evaluators who were told that the author was Black found more of the embedded errors and rated the memo as lower quality than did those partners who were told the author was White. Specifically, they found an average of 2.9 spelling or grammar errors in the memo allegedly written by the White attorney, as compared with 5.8 spelling/grammar errors in the one supposedly written by the Black attorney. The author of the study explains: "we see more errors when we expect to see errors, and we see fewer errors when we do not expect to see errors" (Reeves 2014, 6). The evaluators were not people who think of themselves as racist or who hold a low opinion of African Americans. Instead, their implicit biases were activated, leading them to find more errors when they thought the author of the memo was Black. Understanding these biases helps us to understand some ways that African Americans are disadvantaged in the labor market.

The Research Focus sidebar in this section discusses a 2004 study of discrimination in the labor market. A more recent audit study by economists Amanda Agan and Sonja Starr (2016) shows that Black applicants continue to face discrimination in the entry-level job market.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market

In 2004, the New York Hiring Discrimination Study sent out two teams of men, each of which included a White, a Latinx, and a Black job tester, all between twenty-two and twenty-six years of age and of similar height. They were given invented résumés presenting the applicants as high school graduates with steady work experience. The men applied for 171 entry-level jobs in the retail and food industries that were listed in the classifieds. The White testers received a callback or job offer 31.0 percent of the time, the Latinx testers 25.2 percent of the time, and the Black testers only 15.2 percent of the time. These findings show that Black job applicants have to search, on average, twice as long as White job applicants to secure entry-level employment.

The study then sent out another team of testers, this time telling the White applicant to indicate that he had a prior drug conviction. In this experiment, White people with criminal records received positive responses 17.2 percent of the time, compared with 15 percent for the Latinx people with no criminal record and 13 percent for Black people with no record. In this round, White people with criminal convictions were still slightly more likely than Black people without convictions to have a chance of securing employment.

The next step in the study involved determining the mechanisms through which this form of labor market discrimination occurred. The authors found three mechanisms: categorical exclusion, shifting standards, and race-based job channeling.

- **Categorical exclusion** occurred when the applicant was not given an opportunity to interview for a job because of his race. One example was when the three testers applied for the same job and the hiring manager dismissed the Black tester and

then asked the White and Latinx testers to come back the next day at 5 p.m. to start work.

- **Shifting standards** occurred when Black, White, and Latinx testers received different responses despite similar levels of experience. In one case, the three testers applied for a line cook position. None of them reported any kitchen experience. The White and Latinx testers were told they could come in for a trial period, whereas the hiring manager told the Black tester that the restaurant was only looking for experienced line cooks. The Black tester was not given a chance.
- **Race-based job channeling** occurred when applicants were told they should apply for a different job opening. For example, the three testers applied for a sales position in a lighting store. The White and Latinx testers were allowed to apply for the position, but the hiring manager told the Black tester that he should apply for the stock boy position instead. Channeling occurred in twenty-three cases. In most cases, the Black and Latinx applicants were channeled into positions that required less customer contact—for example, from server to busboy or from sales to stocking.

This study reveals persistent discrimination in hiring practices, even given an ideal scenario in which articulate, clean-cut young men posed as high school graduates with some work experience. In real-world situations, there may be even more discrimination and unequal job opportunities.

For Discussion

Why do you think employers were less likely to call Black and Latinx job applicants in for an interview?

Why do you think employers suggested that Black testers apply for stock boy positions instead of sales positions?

Have you seen evidence of similar discriminatory patterns in your experience?

Source: Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009.

Structural Explanations

Some scholars have looked beyond individuals to explain the disparities between social groups in terms of larger structures. Edna Bonacich (1976) introduced the concept of the **split labor market** to help understand earnings inequalities. A split labor market happens when the price of labor differs between two groups. A racially split labor market in the United States began with slavery—when enslaved people were not paid at all while White laborers competed in a separate labor market. After the end of slavery, this split labor market continued, with White workers earning more than Black workers for the same jobs.

Edna Bonacich (1976) attributes this disparity to unionization—White workers were more likely to be unionized and often prevented Black workers from joining their unions. This strategy ended up hurting all workers—as employers used Black workers as strikebreakers, thereby diminishing the power of unions. When unions were strengthened during the New Deal, White union organizers reached out to Black workers to join the unions. With coalitions between Black people and White people, labor conditions improved, and wages were higher for all.

GLOBAL VIEW

Do Some Countries Discriminate More than Others?

Audit studies have been used to study employment discrimination around the world. Lincoln Quillian and colleagues (2019) conducted a meta-analysis of 97 field experiments in 9 countries. These studies included a total of 200,000 job applications submitted under experimental conditions in nine European and North American countries: the United Sates, France, Germany, Sweden, Canada, Belgium, Norway, Great Britain, and the Netherlands.

This meta-analysis revealed that people of color face significant barriers to employment in all these countries. The rates of discrimination, nevertheless, varied by country. On average, White applicants received 65 to 100 percent more callbacks in France and Sweden than non-White applicants; in Germany, the United States, and Norway, they received 20 to 40 percent more callbacks.

Across these countries, the authors found that individuals of African, Middle Eastern or North African, and Asian (mostly South Asian) descent, experienced relatively similar levels of discrimination. In sum, based on more 200,000 job applications, non-White groups, regardless of their immigrant status, experience significantly higher levels of discrimination in the hiring process, especially in France and Sweden.

Source: Quillian et al. (2019).

The increases in labor costs that resulted from this solidarity between Black and White workers led to higher labor costs and cut into the profits for factory owners. The factory owners responded with three changes—that would reshape the U.S. economy: (1) they relocated part of the manufacturing processes abroad where they could benefit from cheaper foreign labor; (2) they relocated their factories to parts of the country where unions were not as strong and wages were lower; and (3) they

mechanized parts of the manufacturing process. These changes all had a negative impact on Black employment.

One prominent explanation for earnings disparities between Black and White men points to the changing nature of U.S. cities, where the decline in manufacturing has meant the disappearance of work. This shift in the labor market has affected Black men in particular because of their concentration in the manufacturing sectors of many major cities.

Deindustrialization, the shift from a manufacturing to a service economy, has affected working-class people in all racial and ethnic groups in the United States. After World War II, working families in the United States experienced newfound prosperity as the U.S. economy grew rapidly with the production of automobiles and steel. These manufacturing jobs often paid well and came with benefits. Mostly men worked in these jobs, and many earned a family wage—an income sufficient to support their wives and children (Milkman 1997; Sugrue 2014). Between 1950 and 1960, average incomes in the United States increased steadily. However, these increases began to level off, and by the 1970s, incomes for the working poor had stopped increasing. The average income for people with less than a high school diploma actually decreased from about $30,000 in 1967 to about $25,000 in 2014 (in constant 2014 dollars; Cahalan and Perna 2016).

One reason for the decreases in the average pay for low-skilled workers is deindustrialization. In 1950, 40 percent of all jobs involved the production of goods. By 1997, less than 20 percent of all jobs were goods-producing (Figure 9-8). Whereas, historically, manufacturing jobs often offered stable employment and a family wage, service-sector jobs are often temporary and part time, and offer lower wages. Between 1979 and 1985, the United States lost 10 percent of its manufacturing jobs. These losses were concentrated in certain geographical areas, thereby amplifying their localized effects. The Midwest lost over a million jobs and the Northeast lost 800,000. By contrast, the West gained 53,000 manufacturing jobs (Sassen 1989). Detroit was one of the cities hit

hardest by global economic restructuring: it lost 70 percent of its manufacturing jobs between 1969 and 1989. By the end of the 1980s, over a third of all African Americans in Detroit lived in poverty, as did half of Detroit's African American children (Kodras 1997).

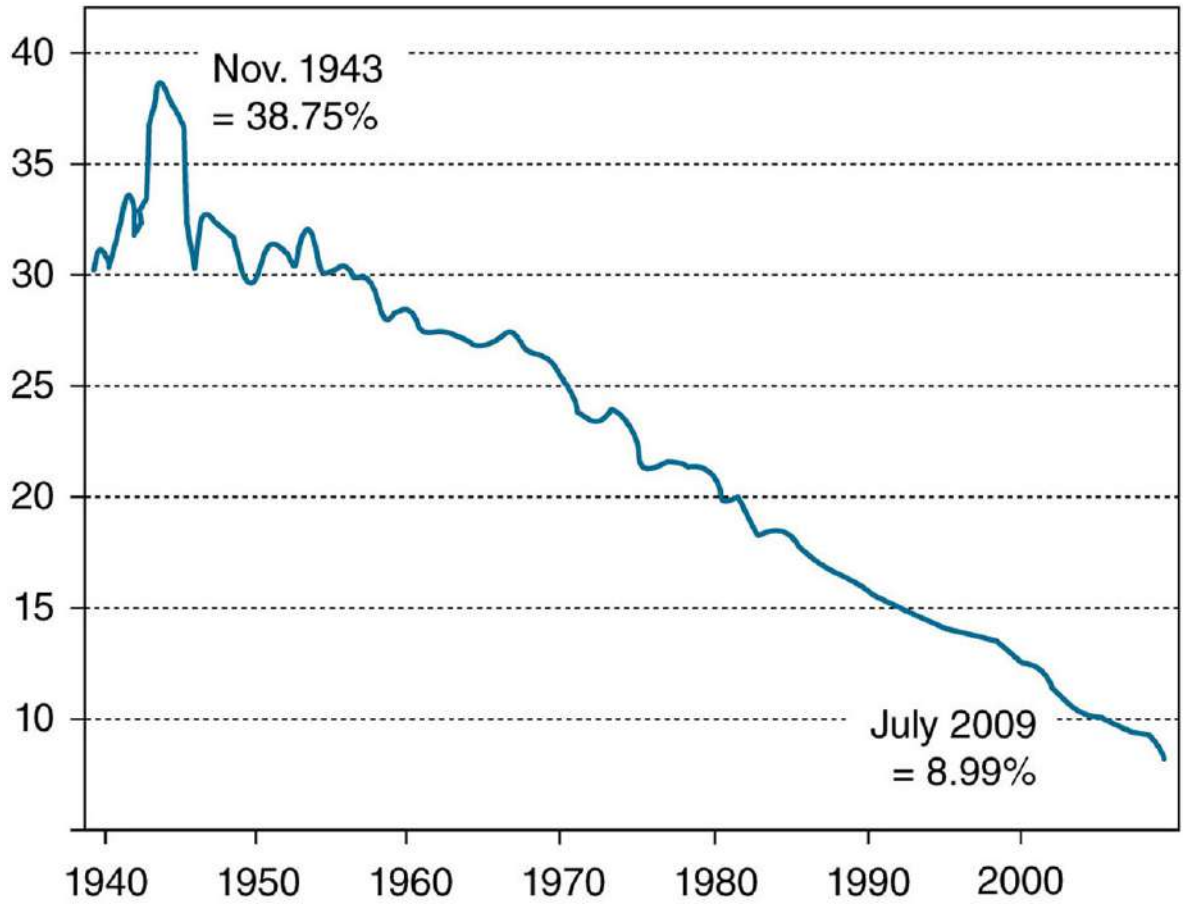


FIGURE 9-8 Percentage of U.S. Labor Force in Manufacturing, 1939–2014
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015).

The decline in manufacturing was also accompanied by a decline in unionized jobs: In 1954, 35 percent of the nation's workforce was unionized. By the early 1980s, this figure had dropped to 20 percent. And, by 2019, the unionization rate was 10.8 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021). In that same year, non-union workers had median weekly earnings of $985 compared to union workers' median weekly-earnings of $1,144. States like North and South Carolina that have right to

work laws had exceptionally low rates of unionization—at 2.9 and 3.1 percent, respectively (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021).

In the 1950s, many urban African American families lived in poverty, but they were among the working poor, as described in the opening excerpt of this chapter. For example, in 1960, 69 percent of men over the age of fourteen who lived in the Black Belt region of the city of Chicago were regularly employed. By 1990, only 37 percent of men sixteen or over were regularly employed (Wilson 1996). This figure is even smaller if we take into account the incarcerated population, as discussed previously.

Up until the 1980s, many Black men were employed in manufacturing jobs, which provided benefits and a family wage, permitting families to attain comfortable standards of living. Once these factories began to close, these comfortable lifestyles went with them. Black men were the hardest hit by this economic restructuring: Oliver and Shapiro (2006, 26) write that "from 1979 to 1984 one-half of Black males in durable-goods manufacturing in five Great Lakes cities lost their jobs."

When the economic crisis hit Detroit and other cities, White residents often fled, whereas African American residents rarely had this option. As a result, by the end of the 1980s, urban areas were much less White and much more impoverished than they had been a decade earlier. The unemployment rates of African American men in these urban areas rose to extraordinarily high rates—by 1990, only 37 percent of males sixteen or over who lived in the Black Belt in Chicago were regularly employed (Wilson 1996).

African American men were hit particularly hard by deindustrialization in Detroit. This is partly because, in 1970, 94 percent of employed Black men in Detroit had blue-collar jobs, the sector that experienced the greatest decline (Sugrue 2014). This deindustrialization trend that started in the 1950s continued for five decades: three out of four production jobs disappeared from Detroit between 1972 and 1992 (Boyle 2001). As the

availability of manufacturing jobs declined, Black men had increasing difficulty finding work (Farley, Danziger, and Hozer 2000).

Two theories may help further explain the prevalence of Black unemployment in deindustrializing urban areas such as Detroit and Chicago. The first, known as the **skills mismatch hypothesis**, suggests that many African American men may lack the skills required to secure work in the changing economy. Although there has been growth in employment sectors that require a college degree, many African American men do not have the qualifications for these jobs.

The **spatial mismatch hypothesis** explains that much of the job growth has occurred in the suburbs, where African American families have been excluded from buying homes. The result is a disconnect between where African Americans live and where jobs are concentrated. Notably, in 1990, 50 percent of employed Black people who lived in Detroit commuted to the suburbs for work. The "spatial mismatch" is not due to African Americans' refusal to move to White neighborhoods. Instead, as Thomas Sugrue (2014) argues, in the 1940s and 1950s, White Detroiters used intimidation tactics such as cross burning to terrorize Black families who attempted to move. In addition, state policies excluded Black people from housing in desirable areas of Detroit and the outlying suburbs. As Detroit's city center was being depleted of jobs, Black families were forced to stay in these hollowed-out areas.

Many White residents followed jobs out of urban areas. Once racial restrictions on housing were lifted, middle-class Black residents left as well. In the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, Black neighborhoods had been vertically integrated by class. Beginning in the 1960s, affirmative action and anti-discrimination laws created opportunities that allowed better-educated Black people to leave inner-city Black communities. This left poor Black people in states of **concentrated disadvantage**. Beginning in the 1980s, many poor Black families found themselves in areas where nearly all of their neighbors were poor. William Julius Wilson (1990) argues that the lack of access to working- and middle-class people creates **social**

isolation—where poor people to not have access to role models, networks, or opportunities that they had when their neighborhoods had more socioeconomic diversity.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 9.3: Sociological Explanations for Income and Labor Market Inequality

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Affirmative Action in Employment

In a profit-based economic system, wages should be determined by competition, and the most qualified people should get the available jobs. If there are lots of people with a certain skill set, wages will be lower for that job. In contrast, if there are fewer people with the requisite skills, then wages should be higher. However, prior to the civil rights era, employers practiced overt discrimination: they refused to hire African Americans and paid them less than White people when they did hire them. For example, in 1927 in Virginia, the average daily pay rate for White bricklayers was $11.00, whereas it was $9.60 for Black people. Similarly, White cement workers earned an average of $6.33 per day, whereas Black people earned an average of $4.42. While many companies paid African Americans less, others refused to hire them at all. This seems somewhat illogical, as we would expect employers to hire the lowest-paid workers they could find. However, racial discrimination is often not based on logic.

One story from the late 1950s is that of Thomas Bailey, a skilled brickmason who had trouble finding steady work. When he applied for jobs, foremen often told him that he had to be a member of a union to work there. Yet, when he applied for membership in the union, the business agent told him he could only be a member if he was actively working. Bailey, an African American, was caught in a bind. He had trouble getting steady work because the unions often refused to allow Black men to join, and the unions controlled access to construction employment. When this issue came to the attention of local civil rights leaders, they pressured the union to allow Bailey to join. He eventually was let in but faced intimidation by other union members. Because of the widespread nature of cases like Bailey's, national leaders began to push for more systemic changes. The construction industry was one of the first

targets because it relied on federal contracts. The federal government had the power to require these companies to obey antidiscrimination laws as a condition of their contracts (Golland 2011).

One of the proposed solutions to labor market discrimination came to be known as *affirmative action*. This term was first used in 1935 in the National Labor Relations Act, which specified that employers could not discriminate against union members or organizers. If they did, they would have to take affirmative action to remedy the effects of that discrimination (Skrentny 1996). Three decades later, President Lyndon Johnson used the term in Executive Order 11246 (1965). In this order, Johnson called for federal contractors to "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin."

Because of this order and other civil rights legislation and rules, by the 1960s, federal contractors had to sign pre-award affirmative action agreements ensuring that contractors would actively recruit a diverse workforce to complete the contract. Contractors also had to agree to sponsor non-White workers for apprenticeships and training. In this way, in towns and cities across the nation, African American and Latinx people were able to secure employment in what had been a primarily White employment sector (Golland 2011).

Today, affirmative action refers to policies and procedures designed to combat ongoing discrimination in the workplace and in schools, as we began to discuss in Chapter Eight. Affirmative action policies aim to keep discrimination from occurring by requiring employers to be proactive in their attempts to diversify their workforce. In addition, affirmative action policies require employers to be conscious of the racial and ethnic makeup of their employees to ensure a more diverse workforce (Skrentny 1996). The overarching goal of affirmative action in employment is to decrease the influence of racial discrimination on the employment prospects of people of color.

Government orders for contractors are one of four kinds of affirmative action in the United States:

1. Government orders regulating government contractors and subcontractors
2. Regulations requiring affirmation action by public employers
3. Court orders based on antidiscrimination law
4. Employers' voluntary human resources policies

Since 1965, companies that do business with the federal government have been required to meet affirmative action requirements. The U.S. Department of Labor website (n.d.) indicates that "for federal contractors and subcontractors, affirmative action must be taken by covered employers to recruit and advance qualified minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and covered veterans. Affirmative actions include training programs, outreach efforts, and other positive steps." In other words, any company that works with the federal government has to show it is taking positive steps to maintain or increase the diversity of its workforce. One example is the promotion of broad recruitment strategies: posting a job advertisement for at least 30 days, advertising in a range of venues, and using objective evaluation criteria to review the applicants.

In 1972, the Equal Opportunity Act created a provision that mandated that employers found guilty of discrimination must implement affirmative action policies. Since 1965, hundreds of employers have implemented affirmative action voluntarily in their hiring and promotion strategies. Nevertheless, despite fifty years of affirmative action, African Americans, Latinx people, and Asian Americans continue to experience labor market discrimination.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 9.4: Affirmative Action in Employment

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Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment

Given the unequal conditions of the formal labor market, many racial and ethnic minorities turn to self-employment as a means to achieve the American Dream and to be their own boss. Self-employment rates vary significantly among groups. In 2010, 13.5 percent of White men were self-employed, compared with 6.2 percent of African Americans, 34 percent of Israelis, 27 percent of Koreans, 10 percent of Mexicans, and 9 percent of Dominicans. Most sociologists explain these disparities in self-employment rates by pointing to differences in social and ethnic networks and human capital (Portes and Yiu 2013).

The self-employment strategy has worked better for some groups than for others. Chinese and Cuban small-business owners, for example, tend to do better than their counterparts who are not self-employed. However, African American, Korean, and Mexican small-business owners often experience severe setbacks. The work of both Adia Harvey Wingfield (2008) and Zulema Valdez (2008a, 2011) adds complexity to traditional understandings of the **ethnic enclave economy**, which refers to clusters of small businesses that primarily serve people of the same ethnicity and work to facilitate the success of co-ethnics. The ethnic enclave economy has helped immigrants of certain national origins, such as Cubans, attain economic success in the United States. According to this framework, immigrants such as the Chinese, Cubans, Greeks, and Koreans have attained success in small-business ownership because of their high human capital, social networks, and close-knit ethnic communities. However, both Harvey Wingfield and Zulema Valdez have criticized scholarship that focuses solely on ethnicity and culture. They argue that it is critical to understand how race, class, and gender—in

addition to ethnicity and culture—play a role in the success of small businesses.

Harvey Wingfield (2008) draws on the concept of a **racial enclave economy**, in which a business's success is both shaped and limited by the racial group membership of the business owner. She uses the example of Black female owners of hair salons to elaborate on this concept. Valdez (2011) draws from interviews with restaurant owners of different ethnic origins to explain how race, class, and gender play a role in shaping the success of local businesses. She uses the concept of an **embedded market**—a market economy embedded within interlocking systems of oppression and privilege, such as "capitalism, patriarchy, and White supremacy"—to explain disparities in the success of small businesses (37). These systems of oppression affect an individual's possibilities for success as an entrepreneur. Whereas previous scholarship on ethnic enclaves might presume that Mexicans have similar options in the restaurant industry, Valdez explains that an upper-class male Mexican may be able to open a highly profitable Italian restaurant in a wealthy neighborhood, whereas a poor female Mexican may be limited to opening a taqueria in the barrio.

Valdez (2008b) conducted a national study in which she looked at four groups of entrepreneurs: White, Korean, Mexican, and Black men. She found that 40 percent of the White owners earned over $75,000 a year, as did 25 percent of the Koreans, 20 percent of the Mexicans, and 17 percent of the Black business owners. In contrast, nearly half of the Black business owners earned less than $25,000 a year, as did 41 percent of the Mexicans, 33 percent of the Koreans, and 24 percent of the White male business owners. Her study found that this disparity can be explained in part by the fact that Korean and White small business owners are more likely to have higher educational levels than the Mexican and Black business owners. Black and Mexican business owners with higher levels of education and more access to bank loans are able to do much better with their businesses. Nevertheless, as Harvey Wingfield (2008) notes, some African American women without college educations are able to do

well for themselves in certain racial enclave economies, such as hair salons. Harvey Wingfield, however, further points out that the enclave places limits on the success of Black female hair salon owners: they are able to do well, but their profits tend to plateau after about five years.

The 2015 *State of Women-Owned Businesses Report* emphasizes that there has been substantial growth in the number of women-owned minority businesses over the past twenty years. However, it also shows that revenues from minority-owned businesses continue to lag behind those of White-owned businesses. The average revenue for businesses owned by Black women in 2015, for example, was just $39,893, compared with an average of $155,477 for all women-owned firms (*The State of Women-Owned Businesses Report*, 2015, 7). As shown in Figure 9-9, White people own 79.3 percent of all firms but take in 90.7 percent of all revenue. In contrast, African Americans own 9.4 percent of firms but take in only 1.3 percent of all revenue.

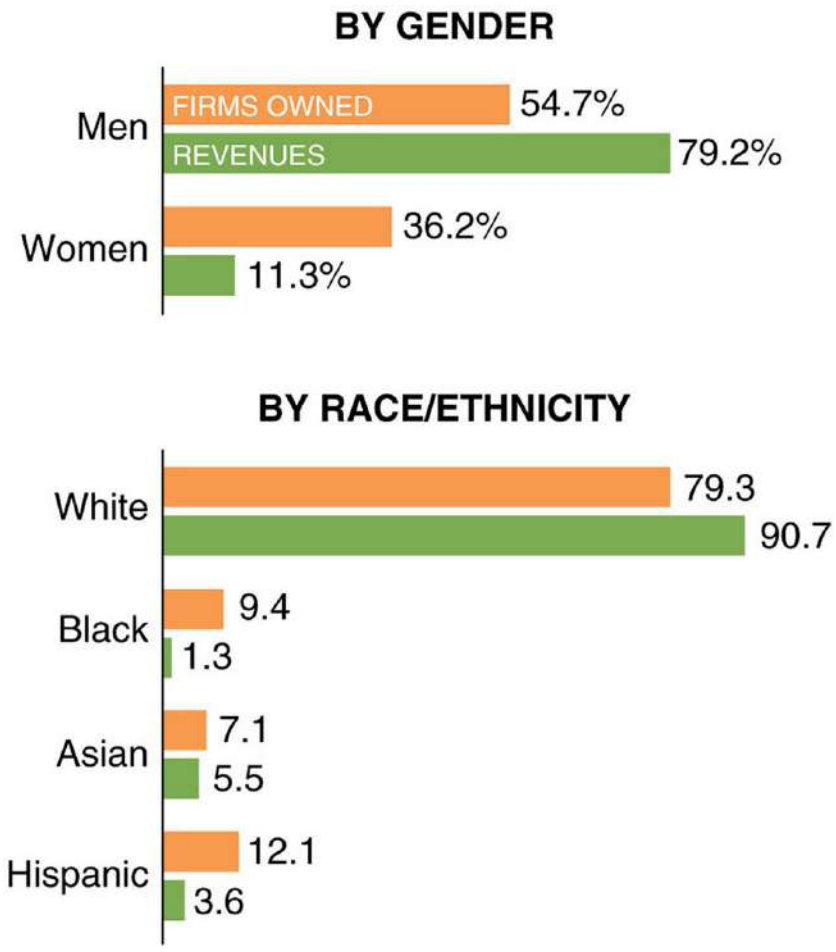

FIGURE 9-9 Share of Business Revenue by Gender and Race/Ethnicity Note: Among those firms whose ownership can be classified by gender and race/ethnicity. Hispanics/Latinxs can be of any race; White, Black, and Asian figures include Hispanics/Latinxs. Source: Desilver (2015).

Small businesses owned by people of color are also likely to be particularly hard hit during a crisis. In the first few weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2 out of 5 Black small businesses and self-employed businesses were forced to close at least temporarily—and many were never able to reopen. Nearly 40 percent of Black self-employed people and small business owners were not working in April 2020 (Long and Van Dam 2020).

SELF-ASSESSMENT 9.5: Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment

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Conclusion and Discussion

Despite fifty years of affirmative action and scores of antidiscrimination laws and lawsuits, non-White people continue to be disadvantaged in the labor market. There are many reasons for this discrimination.

One reason is that it is difficult, or even impossible, to simply legislate away discrimination. Employers may be discriminating against non-White people and women unconsciously. As mentioned in Chapter Three, racial ideologies are often ingrained in our individual perceptions. A White hiring manager may not be aware that he thinks that a White man is a "natural leader" because of entrenched stereotypes and implicit biases. He also may not realize that his presumptions that a Black man is irresponsible or a Latina is incapable of being professional are based on those individuals' race or ethnicity. In many ways, labor market discrimination will not disappear until racial stereotypes go away.

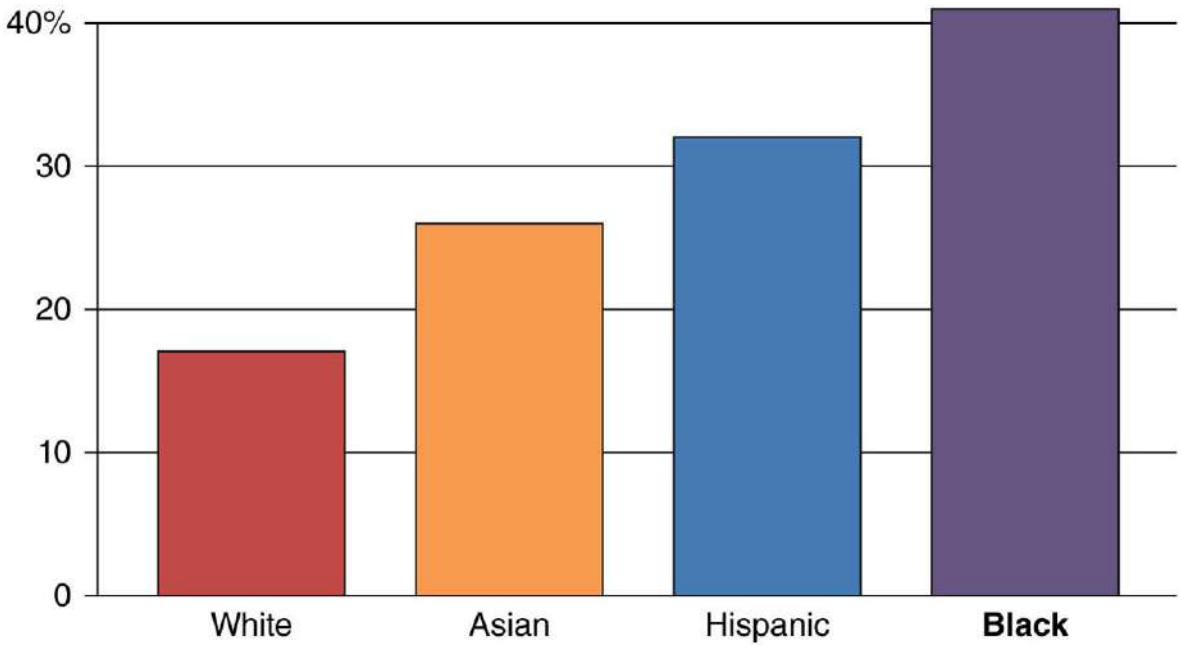

FIGURE 9-10 Black Small Businesses Hit Twice as Hard as White Ones Source: Long and Van Dam (2020).

Another set of reasons for the earnings gap is structural: growth in certain industries and contraction in others are due to global forces that are beyond the control of a single government. Nevertheless, a government can provide training programs to get people up to speed and to work in emerging fields. This is an example of a race-neutral program that may help reduce racial disparities.

A related reason for this gap is that the labor market and the small-business market are structured by deeply entrenched inequalities, patriarchy, and racial divisions. Racial segregation in housing and schools, for example, leads to racially segregated social networks, which themselves reproduce preexisting inequalities. We will learn more about the interlocking nature of different systems of inequality in Chapter Ten, which focuses on structural racism. As the United States becomes increasingly unequal, it is critical to work toward ameliorating overall inequality while striving to reduce disparities among racial groups.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 9.6: Conclusion and Discussion

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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

9.1 What is the extent of income inequality, and how does it vary by race, ethnicity, and gender?

- Overall income inequality in the United States is at a historic high. This inequality is exacerbated when we take racial, ethnic, and gender disparities into account.

Review

» How has inequality changed over the course of the twentieth century?

» How unequal is the United States compared with other countries?

» What is the difference between the wage gap and the earnings gap?

Critical Thinking

» How do the wage and earnings gaps represent different facets of inequality?

» Why has earnings inequality increased over the past fifty years?

9.2 What are some dimensions of labor market inequality?

- A complete understanding of racial disparities in the labor market requires a consideration of gender, national-origin differences, incarceration rates, and unemployment rates.

Review

» Why is it important to take human capital into account when measuring earnings disparities?

» How do racism and sexism operate differently in the labor market?

Critical Thinking

» Of the explanations provided, which do you find most convincing for explaining the earnings disparities between Black men and White men? Why?

9.3 How do sociologists explain labor market inequality?

- Sociologists offer various explanations for labor market disparities, ranging from human capital disparities to employer discrimination and structural changes in the overall economy.

Review

» To what extent are Asians advantaged or disadvantaged in the U.S. labor market?

» How do the individual-level explanations for labor market disparities differ from the structural explanations? To what extent could these explanations work together?

Critical Thinking

» Why does the author argue that the incarcerated population should be included in counts of the unemployed?

» Are audit studies a useful way to measure discrimination? Why or why not? What are the weaknesses and strengths of this approach?

» Why is it important to take into account gender when studying

racial inequality?

9.4 Can affirmative action be an appropriate remedy for labor market discrimination?

- Few employers have affirmative action policies in place. Those that do are required to take positive steps to ensure that their company does not practice racial discrimination and has a diverse workforce that reflects the working-age population of the United States.

Review

» How has affirmative action been implemented in the United States?

Critical Thinking

» What strategies do you think could be implemented to reduce the earnings penalty for non-White workers?

9.5 What is the relationship between self-employment and labor market inequality?

- Self-employment and entrepreneurship have worked well for some racial minority groups but not for others.

Review

» In owning successful small businesses, what are some of the barriers that women and racial minorities face in particular?

Critical Thinking

» Can people of color avoid discrimination by becoming entrepreneurs? Why or why not?

» How is an embedded market related to ethnic and racial enclaves? Evaluate how the embedded market affects minority-owned businesses.

Talking about Race

Income inequality has increased overall in the United States since the 1970s: the rich have become richer while the poor have become poorer. Think of ways to use what you have learned in this chapter to talk with people close to you about inequality. What is the relationship between overall inequality and inequality between racial groups? How could a decrease in overall inequality lead to a decrease in racial inequality? Do you think there could be room for interracial solidarity in discussions about income inequality?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 9.7: Check Your Understanding

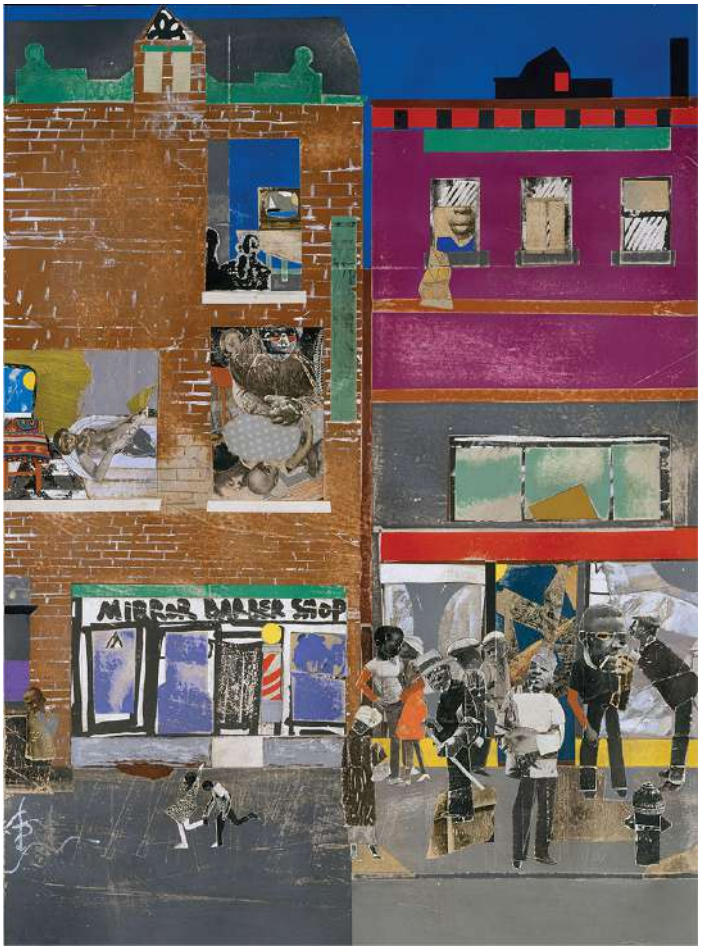
[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

LIST OF KEY TERMS

- Categorical exclusion
- concentrated disadvantage
- Deindustrialization
- earnings gap
- embedded market
- ethnic enclave economy
- Gini coefficient
- Human capital
- implicit bias
- Race-based job channeling
- racial enclave economy
- Shifting standards
- skills mismatch hypothesis
- social isolation
- spatial mismatch hypothesis
- split labor market
- underemployment
- wage gap

10
Inequality in Housing and Wealth

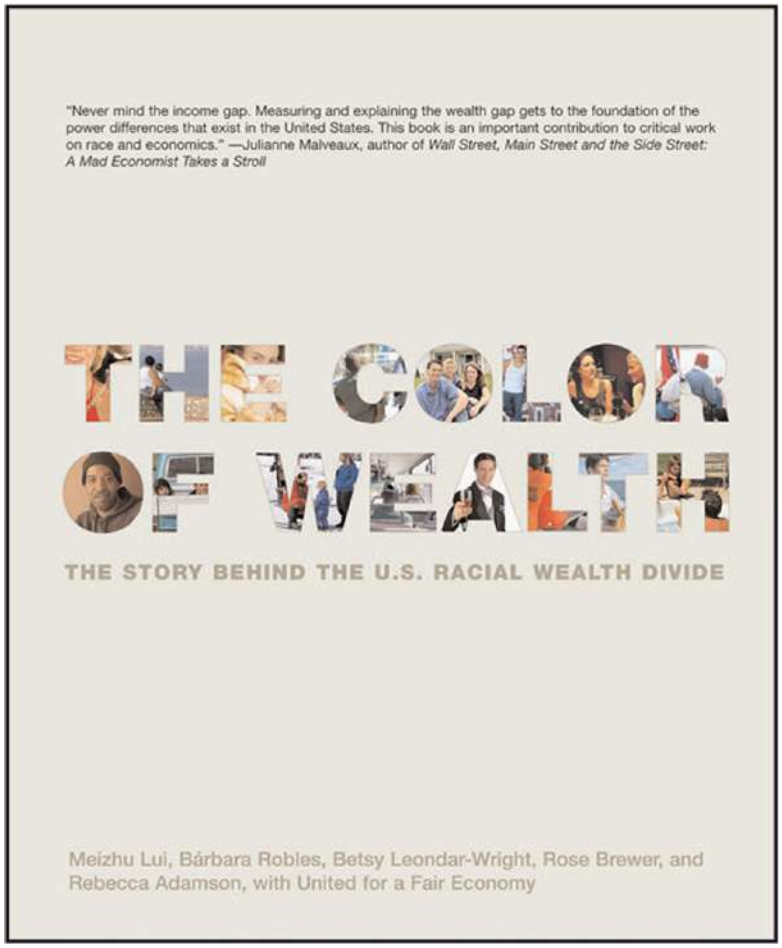
Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced



The Block. Romare Bearden. 1971. Cut and pasted printed, colored and metallic papers, photostats, graphite, ink marker, gouache, watercolor, and ink on Masonite. 48 x 216 in. (*Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY*)

As You Read

- **10.1** What are the historical reasons for housing and wealth inequalities in the United States?
- **10.2** When and how did residential segregation become a characteristic of U.S. cities?
- **10.3** What is the extent of wealth inequalities today in homeownership and beyond?
- **10.4** What factors are perpetuating and exacerbating wealth inequalities?


"Never mind the income gap. Measuring and explaining the wealth gap gets to the foundation of the power differences that exist in the United States. This book is an important contribution to critical work on race and economics." —Julianne Malveaux, author of Wall Street, Main Street and the Side Street: A Mad Economist Takes a Stroll
THE COLOR OF WEALTH
THE STORY BEHIND THE U.S. RACIAL WEALTH DIVIDE
Meizhu Lui, Bárbara Robles, Betsy Leondar-Wright, Rose Brewer, and Rebecca Adamson, with United for a Fair Economy

Inequalities in housing and wealth are deeply rooted in American history. The following excerpt from *The Color of Wealth* gives one example of how historical policies in the United States still reverberate today

A racially mixed group is gathered in a church basement for a workshop on the racial wealth divide. A trainer from United for a Fair Economy has just presented the facts that a typical white family has about $121,000 in assets, compared to the typical family of color, which has about $17,000 in assets.

In response, Ed, a middle-aged white man, raises his hand. “I hear what you are saying—that white people tend to have more money. But I don’t like that what you are implying—that I should feel guilty about it. I swear, everything I have, I worked hard for.”

> Ed has a point. He says he studied hard in college, worked hard at every job, and saved steadily until he could buy a home. For the past several years, he and his wife have been contributing to a retirement account.
>
> The trainers ask him who helped him become prosperous, and he says, “No one.” When the discussion turns to affirmative action, he says he opposes racial preferences and government handouts.
>
> But then the trainers lead the group in an exercise in which participants put milestones of their family’s history on a giant timeline on the wall.
>
> In turns out that Ed’s great-great-grandfather got a farm in Nebraska through the Homestead Act—a program only available to whites.
>
> His father, a World War II veteran, got a Veterans Administration mortgage and went to college on the G.I. Bill—programs that black G.I.s couldn’t take full advantage of because of housing and education discrimination. Thanks to those boosts to earlier generations, Ed’s college tuition as well as the down payment on his home could be paid by his parents.
>
> It may be true that he studied hard, worked hard, saved—and so can claim some credit for his assets. But how much of the credit is his? How much is due to public investments in his family?
>
> A Latina woman, Larisa, asks Ed, “What about me? I studied hard, worked hard, and saved just like you. But I didn’t get the same rewards. Doesn’t that mean your money comes partly from your race?” Ed admits that it does.
>
> *Source*: *Lui et al. 2006*, *4–5*.

In this excerpt, why do you think the trainers in the church workshop thought it was important for Ed to consider his family history? Are the programs his family benefited from—the Homestead Act and the G.I. Bill

—government handouts? Are government handouts desirable? Why might it be useful to understand these historical programs?

In this chapter, we will learn about wealth inequality—both overall inequality and inequality among racial and ethnic groups. **Wealth** is the sum total of a person's **assets**—cash in the bank and the value of all property, not only land but houses, cars, stocks and bonds, and retirement savings—minus debt. It is something built up over a lifetime and passed on to the next generation through inheritances.

Wealth inequality in the United States is staggering: 1 percent of Americans own nearly half of the wealth in the country (Norton and Ariely 2011). Despite this tremendous inequality, the idea persists that if you work hard, you will succeed. This ideology is deeply rooted in the American psyche and perpetuated through popular media and folklore. In the story at the start of this chapter, Ed believes he deserves what he has because he has worked hard. Yet many people work hard all of their lives and die with no assets. As writer and activist George Monbiot (2011) put it, "If wealth was the inevitable result of hard work and enterprise, every woman in Africa would be a millionaire."

In Chapter Nine, we learned about income inequality. Wealth inequality, as we will see, is both more entrenched and more severe. Most Americans think wealth should be distributed more equally—even as they underestimate the true extent of inequality. Most believe a fair distribution would mean a substantial amount of wealth for the middle class. The reality, however, is very different, with the middle class holding very little or no wealth and the poor having no wealth at all. These proportions—broken down into ideal, perceived, and actual distributions—are shown in Figure 10-1. As this figure shows, the United States is a highly unequal society in terms of wealth and is even more unequal than most of us realize. The top 20 percent of the population controls over 80 percent of the wealth (Norton and Ariely 2011). More recent data shows these inequalities have sharpened: by 2016, the top 10 percent of the population controlled 77 percent of the wealth in the U.S. and the bottom

50 percent only controlled 1.1 percent (Kuhn, Schularick, and Steins 2020).When we add race into the equation, the numbers get starker. Black and Latinx families in the United States own just nine cents of wealth for each dollar White families own (Kuhn, Schularick, and Steins 2020). How do we explain such racial disparities in wealth?

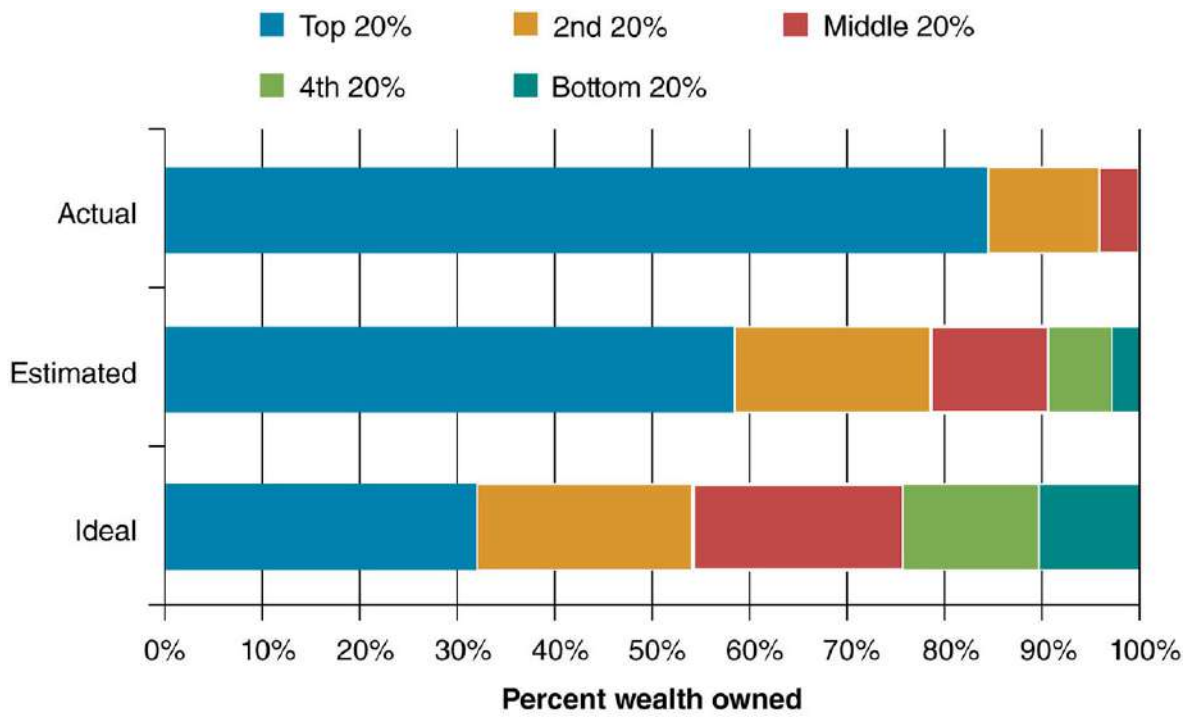


FIGURE 10-1 Ideal, Perceived, and Actual Wealth Distribution in the United States
Source: Norton and Ariely (2011).

As we will see, the reasons for these disparities run deeper than those for income disparities. Wealth inequality is related to income inequality, but wealth and income inequality function differently. The wealth inequality between White people and Black people, for example, is a result of historically embedded inequalities that go back to the time of slavery, the Jim Crow era, and early-twentieth-century housing policies. Today, it is perpetuated and even exacerbated by inequalities in homeownership, college attendance, inheritance, and unemployment rates. Homeownership, often considered the cornerstone of the American Dream, is one of the primary driving forces behind racial disparities in wealth. In this chapter, we will take a close look at the historical roots of

wealth inequality, as well as contemporary trends, through the lens of race. We will begin with slavery, which set the stage for contemporary racial inequalities.

Land Ownership after Slavery

At the end of the Civil War, African-descended people who had been enslaved for generations were freed. Slaves had cleared the forests and made the land productive, generating wealth for southern landowners. They ceased to be the property of White people, yet had no property of their own. Enslaved Africans played a tremendous role in creating prosperity for the United States, but their enslavement prevented them from accumulating any wealth.

Slaves were, by definition, unable to own any type of property. With freedom came limited possibilities for land ownership. In 1865, Congress established the Freedman's Bureau and the Freedman's Savings Bank—two initiatives designed to help formerly enslaved people establish financial independence. In that same year, General William Sherman issued Special Field Order No. 15, which set aside land for former slaves in an area that traversed the coastal regions of South Carolina and Florida. Sherman's order specified that Black families could settle on no more than forty acres of tillable land. The order, however, stopped short of conferring titles to the land. In less than a year, 40,000 ex-slaves had settled on 400,000 acres of land. The success of this program was short-lived: by the end of 1865, President Johnson had ordered the removal of former slaves from the lands they had settled and returned the lands to their former owners (Darity 2008; Cimbala 1989).

In 1866, former slaves were given another opportunity to acquire land: the Southern Homestead Act (SHA) reopened the door for former slaves to apply for land. The SHA allocated forty-six million acres of public lands for homesteading in five southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Both Black people and White people were permitted to apply for this land, much of which was not productive

(Canaday, Reback, and Stowe n.d.). In 1872, Congress dismantled the Freedman's Bureau, and, in 1874, the Freedman's bank failed because its all-White trustees issued speculative loans to White investors and corporations. The 60,000 Black people who had deposited more than $1 million (over $20 million in today's dollars) into this bank lost most of their savings (Lee 2019). By 1900, only one-quarter of southern Black farmers owned their land (Oliver and Shapiro 2006). The rest eked out a living working for others or eventually made their way north to seek their fortunes in the cities there.

Although some Black Americans found economic opportunities in northern cities, they were not able to reap the same advantages over time as their White counterparts. One of the main reasons for the inability of Black people to build wealth has been the creation of housing segregation within U.S. cities. **Residential segregation** happens when different groups of people are sorted into distinct neighborhoods.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 10.1: Land Ownership After Slavery

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Residential Segregation

Today, most U.S. cities are heavily segregated, yet this was not the case during the nineteenth century. Urban residential segregation in the United States was created in the early twentieth century and has had harmful consequences for the wealth portfolios of Black Americans.

The century following emancipation saw dramatic changes in the demographics of the United States. In 1870, 80 percent of Black Americans lived in the rural South. By 1970, this figure had reversed: 80 percent of Black Americans had come to live in cities, equally divided between the North and the South. During the same period that Black Americans were migrating to the North, European immigrants were arriving in U.S. cities.

At first, Black people in urban areas lived in close proximity to White people. Yet between 1900 and 1940, U.S. cities were transformed from having very little residential segregation to having high levels of it. In Kansas City, for example, residential segregation tripled between 1900 and 1930. By 1930, the typical Black Chicagoan lived in a neighborhood that was over two-thirds black. In effect, the urban ghetto in the United States was created in the first two decades of the twentieth century (Massey and Denton 1993). How did this happen?

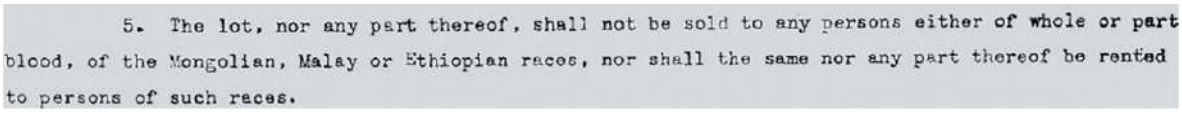
Part of the explanation is that African Americans moved into cities that had previously had small numbers of non-White people. The rise of segregation, however, was not an organic process: White residents created segregation and ensured that it persisted.

The Creation of Residential Segregation

A combination of three forces led to residential segregation: collective racial violence carried out by White people, practices created and reinforced by the emerging real estate industry, and federal housing programs that were made available almost exclusively to White people.

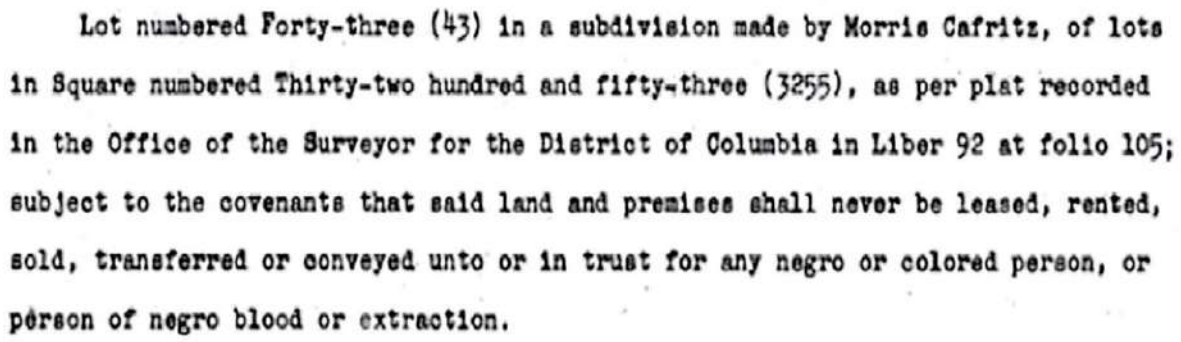
The first factor that contributed to residential segregation was that throughout the twentieth century, White residents used racial violence to keep Black people out of primarily White neighborhoods (Gotham 2000; Lipsitz 2006). White people engaged in cross burning and window breaking, and joined organized mobs in nearly every major northern city. There were hundreds of incidents of racial violence intended to prevent Black people from moving into White neighborhoods in Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and other cities. In most cases, these violent actions went unpunished (Sugrue 2008). In addition to these acts of overt violence, White residents also engaged in more subtle maneuvers. For example, when African American physician Clarence Hinton purchased a home in an all-White neighborhood in Washington, DC, his neighbors put padlocks on his front and rear doors to try and prevent him from moving in (Shoenfeld and Cherkasky 2017).

The second factor was the creation of **racially restrictive covenants**—contractual agreements that prevent the sale or lease of property to non-White people—originated and reinforced by the real estate industry. By the 1920s, deeds in nearly every new housing development in the northern United States prevented the ownership or rental of houses in the development by anyone who was not white. From the 1930s until the 1960s, the guidelines of the National Association of Real Estate Boards prevented realtors from selling homes to non-White people in White areas (Sugrue 2008). Kevin Gotham (2000) argues that the primary motive for these covenants was economic: real estate investors wanted to ensure their profits, and they believed that racially stable and all-White neighborhoods were the most likely to increase in value over time.



5. The lot, nor any part thereof, shall not be sold to any persons either of whole or part blood, of the Mongolian, Malay or Ethiopian races, nor shall the same nor any part thereof be rented to persons of such races.

Deed from 1929 noting restrictions on renting or selling a home to non-Whites in Seattle.



Lot numbered Forty-three (43) in a subdivision made by Morris Cafritz, of lots in Square numbered Thirty-two hundred and fifty-three (3255), as per plat recorded in the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia in Liber 92 at folio 105; subject to the covenants that said land and premises shall never be leased, rented, sold, transferred or conveyed unto or in trust for any negro or colored person, or person of negro blood or extraction.

Reproduction of a racially restrictive covenant from Washington, DC Source: Office of Recorded Deeds, Washington, DC.

In 1948, the Supreme Court declared these covenants unenforceable. And in 1968, the passage of the Fair Housing Act made these covenants illegal. Once covenants became illegal, real estate agents developed new tactics to preserve residential segregation. One of their tactics was **blockbusting**: When a Black family moved into an all-White neighborhood, realtors used scare tactics to frighten White families to sell their homes and get out before the neighborhood "turned." Realtors would then buy the homes and sell them to Black people for a handsome profit. Another common practice was **steering**, in which real estate agents would show homes in White neighborhoods only to White people and homes in Black neighborhoods only to Black people. For these and other reasons, over sixty years after the passage of the Fair Housing Act, we still have high levels of residential segregation, which in turn exacerbate wealth inequality.

The final reason for residential segregation is the nature of federal housing programs and policies. We saw in Chapter Two that the early twentieth century was a time when the color line for White immigrants

was in flux. Federal housing policies in the 1930s would solidify the line between White people and non-White people for decades to come.

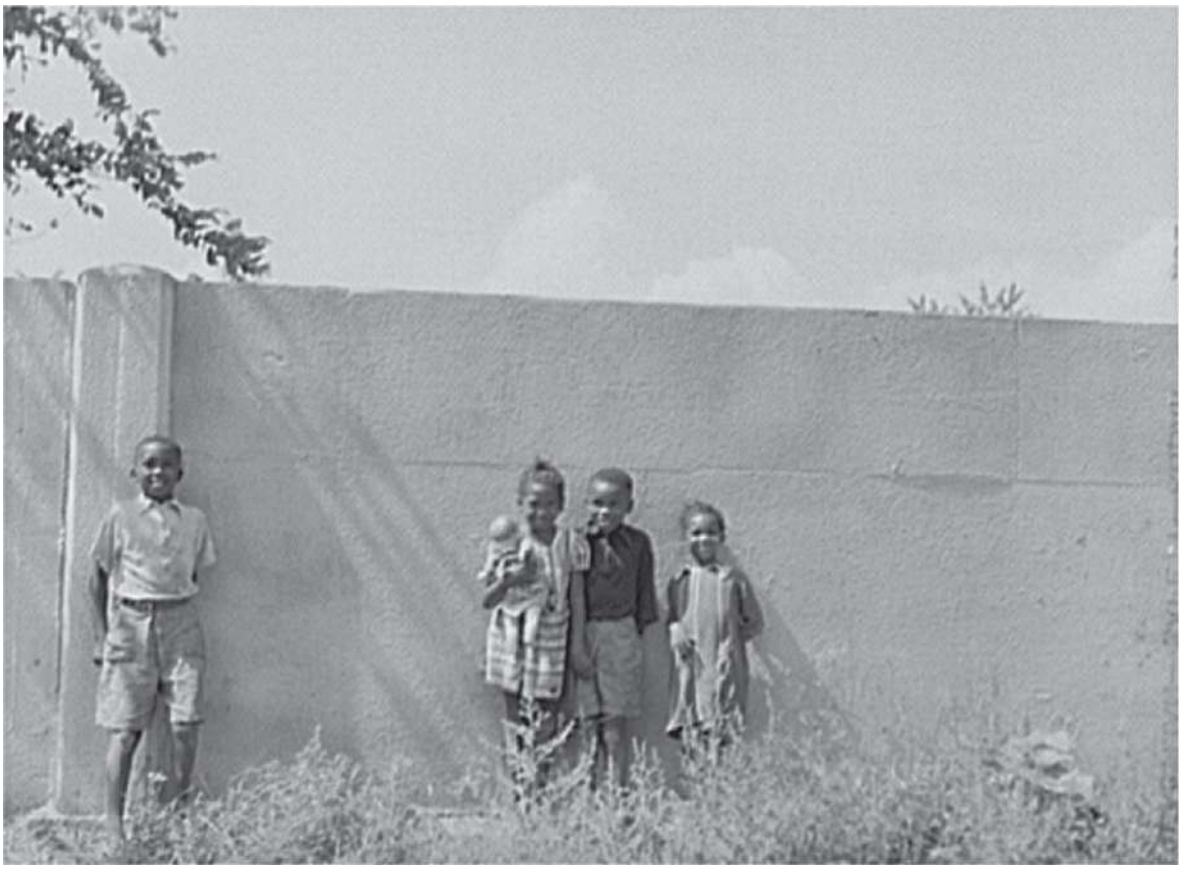
In 1933, half of the nation's mortgages were in default and President Roosevelt responded to this housing crisis by creating the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) in June of 1933. Within two years, the HOLC had purchased over one million home mortgages, and was able to offer homeowners terms that saved most of their homes from foreclosure. In addition to salvaging old mortgages, the Roosevelt administration created policies that would help prevent future mortgage crises and promote homeownership. The Roosevelt administration then created the **Federal Housing Administration (FHA)** in 1934. The FHA provided federally subsidized insurance to private lenders to protect them against losses. The FHA encouraged the building of new homes for people living in crowded tenements in inner cities by creating a new, government-backed mortgage system. Prior to the creation of the FHA, people had to come up with as much as half of the value of a home before purchasing it. The FHA created the conditions under which banks could loan people money to purchase homes with small down payments and at reasonable interest rates. The vast majority of new homes were built in city suburbs, where suburban living was enabled by the simultaneous construction of highways and the development of suburban services (Oliver and Shapiro 2006).

A sign in the integrated Long Island community of Lakeview, New York, in 1962 reads: "Negroes! This community could become another ghetto. You owe it to your 'family' to buy in another community."

Banks used FHA guidelines to decide who should be permitted to borrow money to purchase homes. The 1938 *Underwriting Manual* of the FHA stated that "if a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes" (quoted in Oliver and Shapiro 2006). The FHA relied on color-coded maps created by the Homeowners Loan Corporation (HOLC) to determine which areas were eligible for its loan insurance program. Because areas where people of color lived were colored red, this practice is often called **redlining** (Rothstein 2017).

Between 1933 and 1978, U.S. government policies enabled over thirty-five million families to increase their wealth through housing equity. As

homeowners, millions of Americans were able to begin to accumulate the tax savings, home equity, economic stability, and other benefits associated with homeownership. This massive subsidy program primarily benefited White families: only 2% of FHA-underwritten loans went to Black families between 1945 and 1959 (Hanchett 2000). Moreover, the homes that White people bought increased in value more rapidly than those purchased by Black people because of the perceived desirability of all-White neighborhoods. In addition, few women were able to benefit directly from these policies, as they did not have the financial stability to purchase homes on their own. Because of racial endogamy in marriages (marrying within one's race), White women benefited because their White husbands purchased homes, whereas Black women only reaped either the same paltry benefits as their husbands or hardly any at all if they were single (Oliver and Shapiro 2006).



A real estate developer built a half-mile wall in Detroit in 1940 to separate a Black from a White community. Today, because of White flight, the wall separates one Black community from another.

One hundred years after slavery ended, these policies and practices related to housing became one of the primary factors responsible for inequality in the wealth portfolios of Black and White families in the United States. Racial violence against Black people who tried to move into White neighborhoods continued well after the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Real estate agents continue to practice steering today, and the wealth generated by the properties purchased by White people who benefited from the federal housing policies of the 1930s continues to be passed down to those individuals' children and grandchildren today.

For example, in 1948, houses in Levittown, New York, were available only to White families. A White couple born in the 1920s could purchase a brand-new home there for $8,000, with no down payment, by taking advantage of the federal housing programs. In the 1960s, that family could use the home equity built up in that property to take out loans to pay for their children's college tuition. And if the couple passed away in the 2000s, their children would inherit the home, in a neighborhood still 98 percent white, valued at $400,000. The opportunity to accumulate that kind of wealth was denied to Black families, who were not permitted to purchase homes in Levittown. Eugene Burnett, for example, is a Black Army veteran who tried to purchase a home in Levittown in 1949. When he put in an application, the agent told him that "the owners of this development have not as yet decided whether they're going to sell these homes to Negroes" (Lambert 1997). Those Black families who were able to purchase homes did not see their real estate values climb in the same way. The average home value in the nearby, primarily non-White Central Islip is about a third of the value of a home in the primarily White Levittown.

These exclusions processes played out across the nation. In Washington, D.C., racially restrictive covenants made it difficult for African Americans to purchase homes outside of the areas into which Black people were crowded, yet it did not stop them from trying. In October 1944, an Italian American real estate agent helped Black homebuyer James Hurd purchase 116 Bryant Street, NW, in Bloomingdale—a central city neighborhood. Hurd's White neighbors filed suit, arguing the sale

violated the racially restrictive covenant in place for homes on Bryant Street. The D.C. Court upheld the covenant and the appeals court struck down the appeal. Then, the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case. And, in 1948, the Supreme Court ruled the covenants were in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 (Shoenfeld and Cherkasky 2017).

VOICES

How America's Vast Racial Wealth Gap Grew: By Plunder

by Trymaine Lee

Elmore Bolling, whose brothers called him Buddy, was a kind of one-man economy in Lowndesboro, Ala. He leased a plantation, where he had a general store with a gas station out front and a catering business; he grew cotton, corn and sugar cane. He also owned a small fleet of trucks that ran livestock and made deliveries between Lowndesboro and Montgomery. At his peak, Bolling employed as many as 40 people, all of them black like him.

One December day in 1947, a group of white men showed up along a stretch of Highway 80 just yards from Bolling's home and store, where he lived with his wife, Bertha Mae, and their seven young children. The men confronted him on a section of road he had helped lay and shot him seven times—six times with a pistol and once with a shotgun blast to the back. His family rushed from the store to find him lying dead in a ditch. The shooters didn't even cover their faces; they didn't need to. Everyone knew who had done it and why. "He was too successful to be a Negro," someone who knew Bolling told a newspaper at the time.

When Bolling was killed, his family estimates he had as much as $40,000 in the bank and more than $5,000 in assets, about $500,000 in today's dollars. But within months of his murder nearly all of it would be gone. White creditors and people posing as creditors took the money the family got from the sale of their trucks and cattle. They even staked claims on what was left of the family's savings. The jobs that he provided were gone, too. Almost overnight the Bollings went from prosperity to poverty. Bertha Mae found work at a dry cleaner. The older children dropped out of school to help support the family. Within two years, the Bollings fled Lowndes County, fearing for their lives. … The period that followed the Civil

War was one of economic terror and wealth-stripping that has left black people at lasting economic disadvantage. … The fate suffered by Elmore Bolling and his family was not unique to them, or to Jim Crow Alabama. It was part of a much broader social and political campaign. … “The origins of the racial wealth gap start with the failure to provide the formerly enslaved with the land grants of 40 acres,” says William A. Darity Jr., a professor of public policy and African-American studies at Duke University. Any financial progress that black people made was regarded as an affront to white supremacy. After a decade of black gains under Reconstruction, a much longer period of racial violence would wipe nearly all of it away.

To assuage Southern white people, the federal government pulled out the Union troops who were stationed in the South to keep order. During this period of so-called Redemption, lawmakers throughout the South enacted Black Codes and Jim Crow laws that stripped black people of many of their freedoms and property. Other white people, often aided by law enforcement, waged a campaign of violence against black people that would rob them of an incalculable amount of wealth.

Armed white people stormed prosperous majority-black Wilmington, N.C., in 1898 to murder dozens of black people, force 2,000 others off their property and overthrow the city government. In the Red Summer of 1919, at least 240 black people were murdered across the country. And in 1921, in one of the bloodiest racial attacks in United States history, Greenwood, a prosperous black neighborhood in Tulsa, Okla., was burned and looted. It is estimated that as many as 300 black people were murdered and 10,000 were rendered homeless. Thirty-five square blocks were destroyed. No one was ever convicted in any of these acts of racist violence.

“You have limited opportunity to accumulate wealth, and then you have a process where that wealth is destroyed or taken away,” Darity says. “And all of that is prior to the effects of restrictive

covenants—redlining, the discriminatory application of the G.I. Bill and other federal programs."

The post-Reconstruction plundering of black wealth was not just a product of spontaneous violence but etched in law and public policy. Through the first half of the 20th century, the federal government actively excluded black people from government wealth-building programs. In the 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal helped build a solid middle class through sweeping social programs, including Social Security and the minimum wage. But a majority of black people at the time were agricultural laborers or domestic workers, occupations that were ineligible for these benefits.

The establishment of the Home Owners Loan Corporation in 1933 helped save the collapsing housing market, but it largely excluded black neighborhoods from government-insured loans. Those neighborhoods were deemed "hazardous" and colored in with red on maps, a practice that came to be known as "redlining."

The G.I. Bill is often hailed as one of Roosevelt's most enduring legacies. It helped usher millions of working-class veterans through college and into new homes and the middle class. But it discriminatorily benefited white people. While the bill didn't explicitly exclude black veterans, the way it was administered often did. The bill gave veterans access to mortgages with no down payments, but the Veterans Administration adopted the same racially restrictive policies as the Federal Housing Administration, which guaranteed bank loans only to developers who wouldn't sell to black people.

"The major way in which people have an opportunity to accumulate wealth is contingent on the wealth positions of their parents and their grandparents," Darity says. "To the extent that blacks have the capacity to accumulate wealth, we have not had the ability to transfer the same kinds of resources across generations."

Seventy years later, the effects of Bolling's murder are still felt by his children and their children. "There was no inheritance, nothing for my father to pass down, because it was all taken away," says

Josephine Bolling McCall, the only one of Bolling's children to get a college degree. Of the seven siblings, those with more education fared best; the men struggled most, primarily working as low-paid laborers. Of Elmore and Bertha Mae's 25 grandchildren, only six graduated from college; of those, two are McCall's children. The rest are unemployed or underemployed. They have never known anything like the prosperity of their grandparents.

Trymaine Lee is a Pulitzer Prize- and Emmy Award-winning journalist and a correspondent for MSNBC. He covers social-justice issues and the role of race in politics and law enforcement.

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/racial-wealth-gap.html

Source: Lee 2019.

Discriminatory and Predatory Lending Practices

Even though the FHA's discriminatory housing programs have been discontinued, black and Latinx families have continued to face disadvantages through contemporary discriminatory lending practices. On average, Black people are 2.7 times more likely than White people to be denied mortgages. Prospective homeowners who are denied mortgages have to either forgo the opportunity to accumulate wealth through homeownership or seek out a less favorable loan with a higher interest rate. In fact, Black homeowners pay 0.54 percent higher interest rates than White homeowners. This half-point differential adds up to tens of thousands of dollars over the course of a loan. Thus, the racial disparity in lending practices has far-reaching consequences. Bankers often claim that Black applicants are more often denied loans because they do not have the same creditworthiness as White applicants. Yet, a study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston revealed that even when credit scores were taken

into account, Black and Latinx mortgage applicants were still 60 percent more likely to be turned down than White applicants (Oliver and Shapiro 2006). Continued discrimination in home loans perpetuates the wealth inequality that was solidified with the FHA programs of the 1930s (Oliver and Shapiro 2006).

RESEARCH FOCUS

The Role of Real Estate in Creating Segregated Cities

In 2011, *Forbes* magazine reported that Mission Hills in Johnson County, Kansas, was the third-richest neighborhood in the United States, with a median income of $243,000 (Vardi 2011). The *Forbes* article did not mention that the neighborhood was 96.8 percent White in 2010 nor that most Kansas City residents did not live in racially segregated neighborhoods prior to the twentieth century. How did segregation happen? And how did it benefit White people? Kevin Gotham's (2000) research addresses these questions through an analysis of the real estate industry.

Between 1900 and 1940, Kansas City went from being a racially integrated city to one with a **segregation index** of 88.0—meaning that 88 percent of all non-White people would have to move to live in integrated neighborhoods. Gotham (2000) argues that this segregation was facilitated and promoted by the real estate industry.

One of the major facilitators of segregated communities was the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB). In the early twentieth century, NAREB published numerous pamphlets and periodicals that warned real estate firms about the financial dangers of integrated neighborhoods. NAREB actively promoted the ideology that all-White neighborhoods were desirable and wise financial investments. In 1924, NAREB amended its code of ethics to indicate that realtors should not facilitate the purchase of homes by non-White people in White neighborhoods. It became unethical for realtors to sell Black people homes in White areas.

Racially restrictive covenants were one of the primary tools used to ensure racial segregation in urban areas around the country. Between 1900 and 1947, Johnson County, Kansas, recorded 148 such covenants, accounting for 96 percent of all subdivisions within

the county. The last restrictive covenant in Johnson County was recorded in 1962.

The J. C. Nichols Company was one of the pioneers of residential land development in the area and one of the first and most prominent developers to use racially restrictive covenants. Between 1908 and 1949, the Nichols Company built dozens of racially restricted subdivisions, such as Mission Hills; the property deeds for homes in these developments warned prospective buyers that Black people could not be owners or tenants. Moreover, the Nichols Company distributed promotional literature designed to convince middle-class White people that "residential life in a racially segregated neighborhood was a mark of social status, upward mobility, and protection from the chaos and social problems of the city."

Kansas City continues to be a hypersegregated city today. Kevin Gotham's (2000) research on the real estate industry shows that this is not because of White preferences to live in all-White neighborhoods, but because of the real estate industry's desire to see profits through the creation of all-White spaces and their promotion of these spaces as desirable neighborhoods.

For Discussion

1. Were there ever racially restrictive covenants in the area where you now live?
2. If your parents or grandparents own a home, do you think you would find a racially restrictive covenant in the deed? (You may be able to look it up online and see).
3. To what extent do you think that restrictive covenants were implemented for profit motives? Does it matter whether the covenants were created to keep property values high or to keep non-White people out?

Source: Gotham 2000.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, bank lending became more predatory, particularly for Black and Latinx people. **Predatory lenders** traditionally include pawnshops, payday lenders, and check cashing services that charge very high fees and interest rates. Following changes in lending laws, the late 1990s saw the rise of another type of predatory financial practice: **subprime loans**, or high-interest loans to people at high risk of defaulting. Black and Latinx homeowners were much more likely than White people to receive loans with unfavorable conditions such as prepayment penalties and high interest rates. Between 1993 and 2000, the percentage of subprime mortgages in Black and Latinx neighborhoods rose from 2 to 18 percent. Overall, Black and Latinx families were about twice as likely to receive subprime loans as White families. By 2009, over 15 percent of subprime loans were in foreclosure (Rugh and Massey 2010; Dymski, Hernandez, and Mohanty 2013).

Segregation exacerbated the effects of the economic crisis for Black families. Metropolitan areas with higher degrees of racial segregation had higher rates of foreclosure. Additionally, Black families in highly segregated cities had been more likely to get subprime loans than their counterparts in less segregated cities. The higher rate of subprime loans in segregated cities was partly because unregulated mortgage brokers targeted Black neighborhoods where regulated banks were less likely to have branches. Notably, more than half of all subprime loans made in the 2000s were for refinancing instead of purchasing new homes. When those homes in primarily Black neighborhoods failed to appreciate in value as expected or decreased in value, families who had borrowed at high interest rates found themselves in financial trouble (Rugh and Massey 2010; Dymksi et al. 2013).

In the aftermath of the 2007–2009 housing crisis, protestors, like these in Brooklyn in 2011, fought back against predatory lenders and foreclosures in their communities.

Chapter 10.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Neighborhood Segregation Today

Even though the housing policies that contributed to residential segregation have been repealed, neighborhood segregation persists today. How do we quantify it? One measure is the **dissimilarity index**, which describes the extent to which two groups—such as Black people and White people—are found in equal proportions in all neighborhoods. We can interpret this measure as the percentage of individuals in either group who would have to move to achieve perfect integration. Another tool for

measuring segregation is the **isolation index**, which compares a neighborhood's demographics against citywide demographics. If, for example, a city is 30 percent black, yet Black people live in neighborhoods that are 50 percent black, the isolation index would be the difference, 20 percent.

Black–White segregation continues to have the highest national dissimilarity index. In 2010, Milwaukee had the highest black–White segregation index at 81.5. In contrast, the segregation index for Hispanics/Latinx people in Milwaukee was 57.0. The city with the highest Hispanic/Latinx–White segregation index was Springfield, Massachusetts, at 63.4. Los Angeles had the second highest, at 62.2 (Michigan Population Studies Center, n.d.). The black–White segregation index is consistently high in cities with large Black populations, such as Detroit and Chicago. This index in 2010 was 80 for Detroit and 76 for Chicago. The average Detroit Black resident lives in a neighborhood that is 81 percent black, and the average Black person in Chicago lives in a neighborhood that is 67 percent black. Latinx people and Asian Americans have remained somewhat less segregated from White people, with dissimilarity indexes of 48 and 41, respectively, in 2010 (Logan and Stults 2011).

Segregation is high in the United States, but it is not absolute: many people share neighborhoods with people of different races. According to data from the 2010 census, the average White American in a metropolitan area lives in a neighborhood that is 75 percent White, whereas the average African American lives in a neighborhood that is 45 percent White and 45 percent black. The average Latinx lives in a neighborhood that is 35 percent White, and the average Asian American lives in a neighborhood that is 49 percent White (see Figure 10-2). The only group that, on average, lives in a primarily White neighborhood is White people (Logan and Stults 2011).

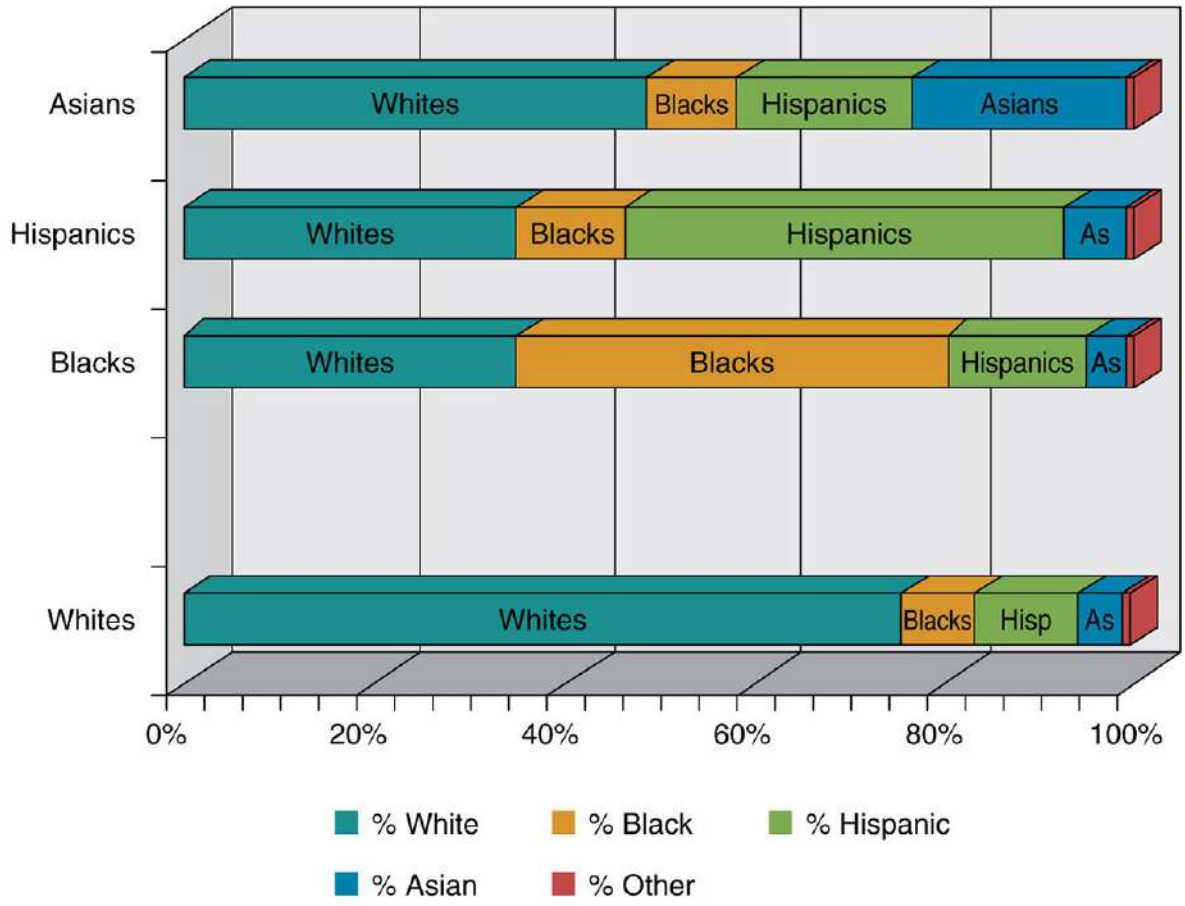


FIGURE 10-2 Diversity Experienced in Each Group's Typical Neighborhood, by Race/Ethnicity, 2010 Source: Logan and Stults (2011).

Scholars sometimes refer to African Americans in urban areas as **hypersegregated** because of the high levels of segregation in these neighborhoods. In contrast, other racial and ethnic minorities tend not to experience such high levels of segregation. Studies show relatively low levels of Native American segregation in urban areas, especially compared to the levels experienced by African Americans (Wilkes and Iceland 2004). In 2000, 1.4 million Native Americans lived in rural areas—accounting for about a third of all Native Americans. Most of these rural Native Americans lived on Indian reservations, effectively separated from non–Native Americans. Outside of reservations, however, rural Native Americans have relatively low levels of segregation (Lichter, Parisi, Grice, and Taquino 2007).

Racial segregation poses a problem not just because people of different races have little contact with one another but because it exacerbates existing inequalities. Black and Latinx families of all economic statuses are more likely than White families to live in neighborhoods with high poverty rates. Even affluent Black and Latinx people live in neighborhoods with fewer resources than those inhabited by poor White people (Logan 2013). Racial segregation often means concentrated poverty, which in turn leads to under-resourced neighborhoods with poor public schools, high levels of crime, and high unemployment rates. High levels of racial segregation mean that Black and Latinx families are more likely than White families to live in neighborhoods that are inhospitable to their success. Children who grow up in segregated, high-poverty neighborhoods are much less likely to finish high school and to secure employment. They are more likely to experience violence growing up and to have children out of wedlock. Residential segregation limits opportunities for middle-class as well as poor Black families (Charles 2003). One of the most longstanding consequences of segregation is that Black families in Black neighborhoods are unable to build up home equity and therefore lag far behind White families in wealth accumulation.

a. Poor, primarily Black/Latinx neighborhood

b. Upper-middle-class, primarily Black neighborhood

c. Upper-middle-class, primarily White neighborhood

d. Poor, primarily White neighborhood

What do these photos of neighborhoods in and around Washington, D.C., tell you about the lives of the people who live there? What do these photos tell you about neighborhood stereotypes?

As we have seen, racial segregation in housing is driven by formal and informal policies and practices. It is also affected by White people's preferences to live in primarily White neighborhoods. Most White Americans balk at the idea of living in a neighborhood with more than a few Black families. Contrary to popular perceptions, residential segregation is not due to Black Americans' preferences for living exclusively among other Black Americans. Sociologists Maria Krysan and Reynolds Farley (2002) analyzed survey data from 2,000 Black families in several cities and found that African Americans prefer racially diverse neighborhoods. In the study, the interviewers showed respondents fictional representations of five neighborhoods, ranging from all Black to all White, and asked them to rank the neighborhoods in order of preference. They also asked respondents if they would not want to live in one of the fictional neighborhoods. Half of the Black respondents chose the neighborhood that was evenly split between Black and White as their most preferred neighborhood. Only 20 percent of the Black respondents

chose the neighborhood that was all black. African Americans in this survey expressed a strong preference for mixed neighborhoods. Although only 35 percent of African Americans were willing to be the first Black family to move into a White neighborhood, nearly all of the respondents expressed willingness to move into a neighborhood if it was primarily White, as long as there were one or two other Black families living there. In contrast, less than a third of White respondents indicated they were willing to move into a neighborhood that was evenly split between Black and White families.

Racial segregation is also encouraged by real estate agents. A recent study in Long Island used undercover paired tests to evaluate racial discrimination by real estate agents. Two undercover testers (either one White and one Black; or one White and one Latinx; or one White and one Asian) would approach real estate agents with identical financial profiles and neighborhood preferences. In 19 percent of the instances, Asians experienced discrimination. For Latinx people, this percentage went up to 39 percent, and half of the Black testers experienced discrimination. Examples of the kinds of discrimination they experienced included providing prospective White buyers with more listings or making different comments about neighborhoods to the testers, based on race. In one example, a realtor commented to a Black customer about how "excited" he gets when there is a new house listing for Brentwood because "they are the nicest people." Meanwhile the same realtor warned the paired White prospective buyer, "please kindly do some research on the gang-related events in that area for safety." In other cases, agents refused to provide house listings or home tours for people of color unless they met their financial qualifications—although they did not impose these same financial qualifications to White people. The researchers highlight that the findings are even more chilling, as this "happened in one of the most educated, most liberal regions of the country" (Choi, Winslow, and Browne 2019).

Chapter 10.2 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

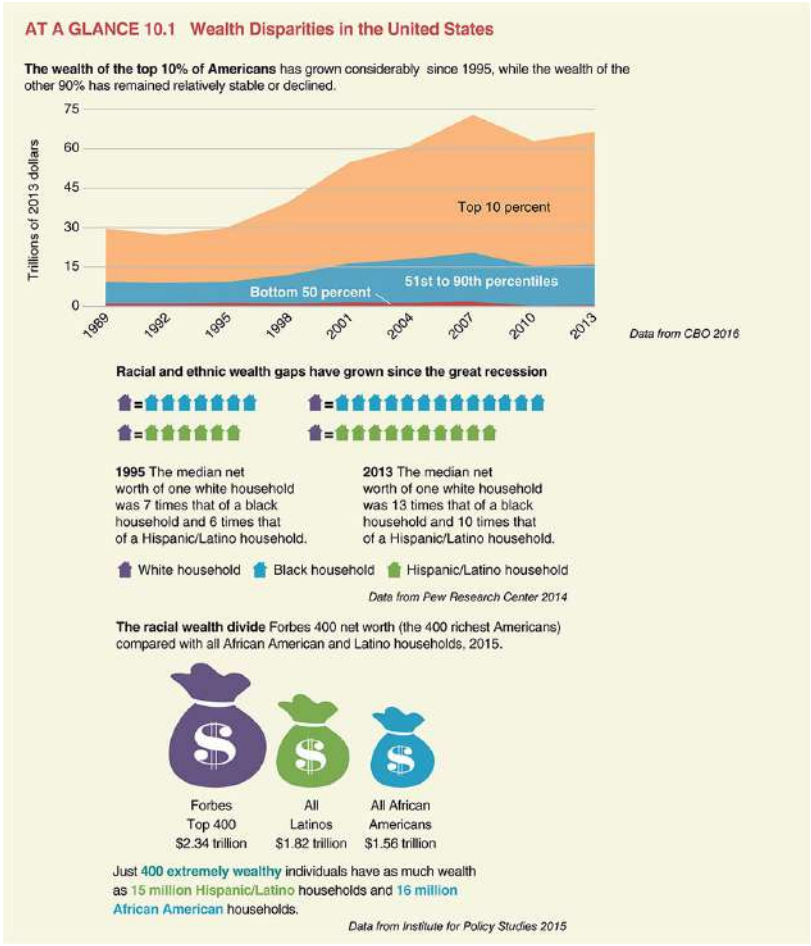
SELF-ASSESSMENT 10.2: Residential Segregation

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Wealth Inequalities

Racial segregation in housing is one of the driving factors behind wealth disparities among racial groups. On average, Afric an American and Latinx people have less than 9 percent of the wealth of White people (At a Glance 10-1; Pew Research Center 2014). The disparities between the wealth portfolios of White and Latinx people and between those of White people and Black people are about twice as large today as they were prior to the recession that began in 2007, primarily as a result of residual effects from the related crisis in the housing market. The housing crisis wiped out all of the gains in wealth made by Black and Latinx families compared to White people since 1984, when the United States first began to track wealth inequality. In 2009, one-third of Black and Latinx households had zero or negative wealth (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor 2011). By 2016, the median Black household had about 12 percent the wealth of the median White household (Kuhn et al 2020).Let's briefly revisit the differences between income and wealth. Americans primarily use their income to live on a day-to-day basis: to pay the rent or mortgage, to buy food and other necessities, to pay for school, and to pay bills. Income differentials often translate into differences in standards of living. Wealth, by contrast, has a different functionality. Wealth includes an individual's accumulated assets, such as savings, home equity, stocks, and business ownership. People don't use wealth to pay for daily expenses (except in financial emergencies). Instead, wealth grants financial stability and is often used to ensure the financial success of future generations through inheritances. Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro (2006, 175) contend that "wealth is money that is not typically used to purchase milk, shoes, or other necessities. … It is used to create opportunities, secure a desired stature and standard of living, or pass along a class status already obtained to a new generation." The vast discrepancies between Black and

White wealth, then, translate into the solidification of racial inequality across generations.


AT A GLANCE 10.1 Wealth Disparities in the United States
The wealth of the top 10% of Americans has grown considerably since 1995, while the wealth of the other 90% has remained relatively stable or declined.
Trillions of 2013 dollars
75
60
45
30
15
0
Top 10 percent
51st to 90th percentiles
Bottom 50 percent
1989
1992
1995
1998
2001
2004
2007
2010
2013
Data from CBO 2016
Racial and ethnic wealth gaps have grown since the great recession
1995 The median net worth of one white household was 7 times that of a black household and 6 times that of a Hispanic/Latino household.
2013 The median net worth of one white household was 13 times that of a black household and 10 times that of a Hispanic/Latino household.
White household
Black household
Hispanic/Latino household
Data from Pew Research Center 2014
The racial wealth divide Forbes 400 net worth (the 400 richest Americans) compared with all African American and Latino households, 2015.
Forbes Top 400 $2.34 trillion
All Latinos $1.82 trillion
All African Americans $1.56 trillion
Just 400 extremely wealthy individuals have as much wealth as 15 million Hispanic/Latino households and 16 million African American households.
Data from Institute for Policy Studies 2015

There are many reasons for wealth inequality. One of the main factors is inequality in home values and homeownership. In 2005, Black and Latinx people derived much greater proportions of their wealth from their homes than White people. Looking at the loss in average wealth for families between 2005 and 2009, it is clear that nearly all of the losses for all families came from losses in home equity (Figure 10-3). Since Black and Latinx families had almost no other wealth—an average of $479 for Latinx families and $626 for Black families—these households lost nearly all of their wealth as a result of the housing crisis (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor 2011).

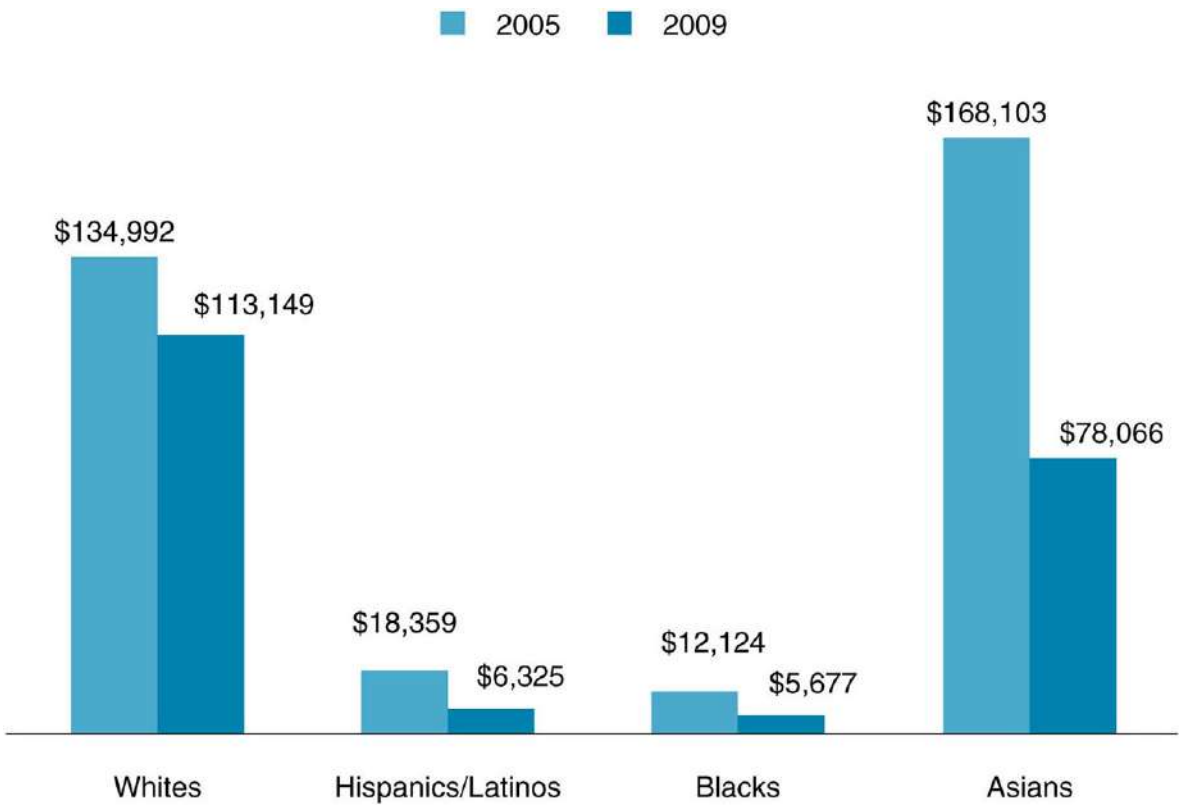
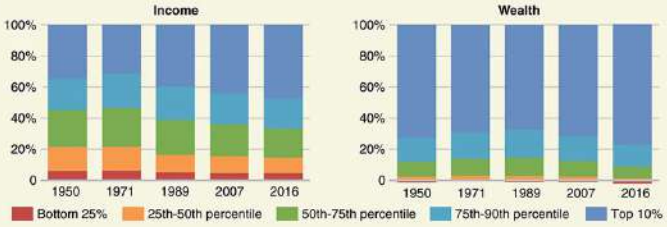


FIGURE 10-3 Average Wealth of Families by Race/Ethnicity in 2005 and 2009
Source: Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor (2011).

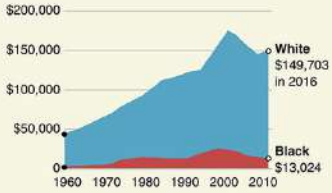
In 2000, Native Americans were the racial group with the lowest average incomes. Relatively little data is available on the wealth holdings of Native Americans. However, Jay Zagorsky (2006) was able to use data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth to assess their wealth holdings. He found that in 2000, the average Native American born between 1957 and 1965 had only $5,700 in wealth, compared with the $65,500 amassed by his or her White counterpart. He also found that only 43 percent of the Native Americans in this age group had bank accounts, compared with 65 percent of baby boomers overall. Only a third of Native American baby boomers owned homes, compared with 57 percent overall. Zagorsky (2006) found that Native Americans own fewer businesses, have lower rates of homeownership, and reside in homes with lower values than the average person living in the United States.

AT A GLANCE 10.2 Wealth Disparities in Black and White

Shares in aggregate income and wealth, by household income



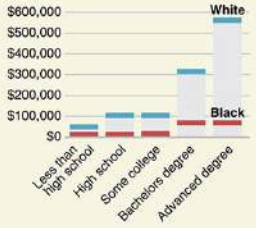
White wealth surges; Black wealth stagnates
Median household wealth, adjusted for inflation



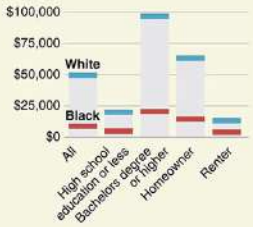
The Black–white wealth gap is as wide as in the 1960s
Median household wealth as a percentage of median white household wealth

Source: Historical Survey of Consumer Finances via Minneapolis Fed and University of Bonn economists Moritz Kuhn, Moritz Schularick and Lurike I. Steins

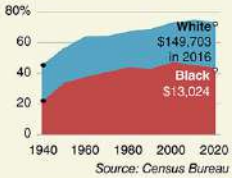
At every education level, Black wealth lags
Median household wealth and education level, 2016



Average cash on hand, 2016*



Black homeownership is in retreat
Homeownership rates by decade and race



Source: Census Bureau

Source: Federal Reserve

**Includes checking and savings accounts, cash, prepaid cards, and directly held stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. Source: Federal Reserve via Elise Gould and Valerie Wilson of the Economic Policy Institute*

RESEARCH FOCUS

The Color of Wealth in the Nation's Capital

In Washington, D.C., White households have, on average, a net worth that is eighty-one times greater than that of Black households. The Urban Institute carried out a telephone survey in 2014 to assess the levels of wealth inequality in the nation's capital, which is 47.7 percent black, 35.7 percent white, 10.4 percent Latinx, and 3.7 percent Asian. The study found substantial wealth disparities by race and ethnicity. The median net worth—the sum of all assets less the value of debts—for White households was $284,000, compared with $13,000 for Latinx households, $3,500 for U.S. Black households, and $3,000 for African households. Korean, Asian Indian, and Vietnamese households all had a median net worth of over $400,000, higher than that of the average White household.

The wealth inequalities are not due solely to income inequalities: in 2014, the median income for both White and Chinese households in Washington, D.C., was $110,000. For African American households, it was $72,000. Latinx households had the lowest median family income, at $59,000. These income differences pale in comparison to wealth differences.

Just over half of White households in the study owned stocks, compared with 18.6 percent of U.S. Black households, 14.6 percent of African households, and 25.9 percent of Latinx households. This figure was just under 50 percent for Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Asian Indian households.

Whereas only a quarter of Black households and a fifth of Latinx households had individual retirement accounts, two-thirds of White, Chinese, and Asian Indian households had these accounts.

Homeownership rates also varied between groups: 78 percent of White households, 90 percent of Chinese households, and 94 percent of Vietnamese households owned their homes, compared with 58 percent of U.S. Black households and about half of African

Black and Latinx households. The home values also varied: U.S. Black and African households owned homes that were 67 percent and 72 percent, respectively, of the median value of homes owned by White people.

Similar to other studies, Kijakazi et al. found that even highly educated Black families have less wealth on average than White families. For White households headed by an individual with a high school diploma or less, the average net worth was $265,000, compared with $130,000 for Black households headed by an individual with a graduate degree. Whereas net worth for White people varies relatively little between those who have a high school diploma or less and those with a bachelor's degree, for Latinx households the difference is substantial: $5,500 versus $53,000. For Black households, the largest gain is between a B.A. degree ($19,000) and a graduate degree ($130,000). At all educational levels, however, net worth for Black people lags behind that for White people.

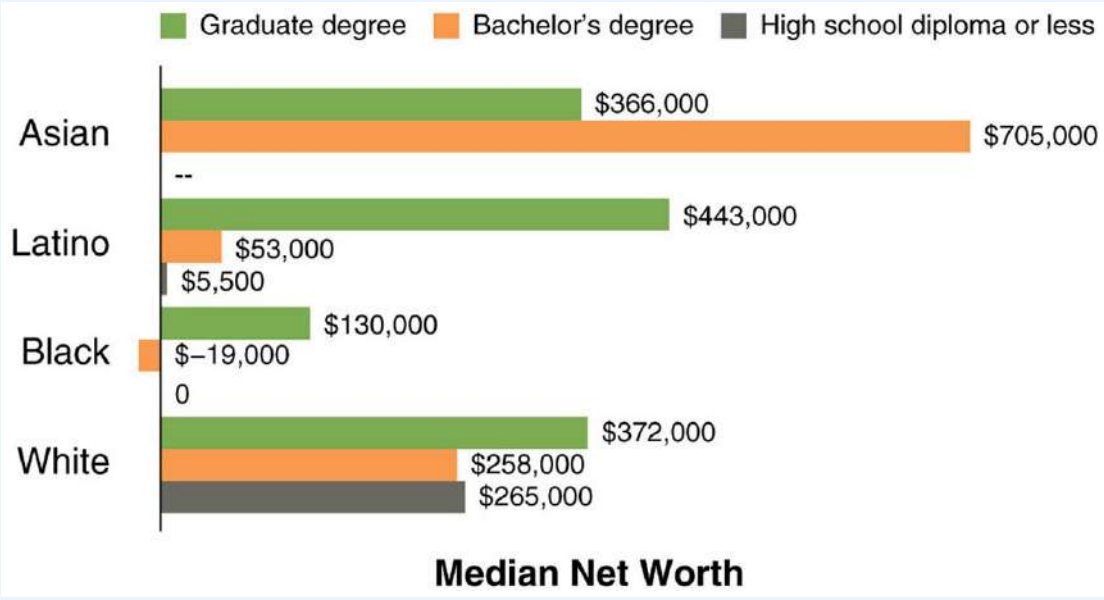


FIGURE RF 10-1 Median Net Worth by Educational Attainment Source: Kijakazi et al. (2016).

Inequality in Homeownership and Home Values

Using the 2001 American Housing Survey, Lauren Krivo and Robert Kaufman (2004) found that over 70 percent of White households owned their homes, compared with 46 percent of Black households, 49 percent of Latinx households, and 55 percent of Asian households. In addition, they found that White homeowners have more home equity than do Black and Latinx people. The median value of home equity for Black people was $52,882, and for Latinx people it was $60,000. In contrast, the median home equity value for White people was $80,000. At $111,100, Asians had the highest average home equity. Moreover, Black and Latinx people were the most likely to have high-interest mortgages: 4 percent of White people had an interest rate higher than 9 percent, compared with nearly 11 percent of Black homeowners and 7 percent of Latinx homeowners. Asians were the least likely to have this kind of mortgage, with only 1.5 percent reporting high interest rates.

Between 2007 and 2009, Black and Latinx people were twice as likely as White people to experience foreclosures (Kochhar et al. 2011). Analyses of home loans made between 2005 and 2008 reveals that 790 African Americans experienced a foreclosure by 2009 for each 10,000 loans, compared with 769 Hispanics and 452 White people. By 2010, 17 percent of Latinx homeowners, 11 percent of African American homeowners, and 7 percent of non-Hispanic White homeowners had lost or were at imminent risk of losing their homes (Gruenstein Bocian, Li, and Ernst 2010). The 2007-2008 housing crisis thus exacerbated preexisting inequalities in homeownership and home values.

Wealth Inequality beyond Homeownership

Families can have negative wealth if the total of their debts exceeds the total value of their assets. This situation has become increasingly common with the expansion of home equity loans, falling housing prices, and rising student debt.

Wealth includes factors beyond homeownership, such as stock holdings. When stock prices plummeted in 2007, Black and Latinx families lost the largest shares of their holdings. Latinx people who owned stocks and mutual funds saw a 32 percent decline in their value between 2005 and 2009, and Black people saw a 71 percent decline in the same period. The stocks owned by White people fell only 9 percent, and those owned by Asians actually increased 19 percent during this same period (Kochhar et al. 2011). In 2013, only 3.3 percent of Black households owned stocks, as compared with 17.2 percent of White households (Herring and Henderson 2016).

High levels of debt also help explain wealth inequality. In 2002, over a quarter of Black and Latinx households had negative net worth, compared with 13 percent of White households. The numbers are even starker when we consider gender: nearly half of all Black and Latinx women had zero or negative wealth in 2007 (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor 2011). In 2013, over half (54 percent) of young Black households (aged twenty-five to forty) had student debt, compared with 39 percent of young White households. Relatedly, these young Black households had a median wealth of $3,600, compared with young White households' median wealth of $35,800 (Huelsman et al. 2015).

SELF-ASSESSMENT 10.3: Wealth Inequalities

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Explaining the Wealth Gap in the Twenty-First Century

Rather than decreasing over time, inequalities among White people, Black people, and Latinx people are increasing. The wealth gap between Black people and White people tripled between 1984 and 2009. In 2013, Thomas Shapiro, Tatjana Meschede, and Sam Osoro published a study that sought to explain why. Based on their study of 1,700 households, these analysts attributed the wealth gap to five factors:

1. Years of homeownership
2. Household income
3. Years of unemployment
4. College education
5. Inheritances or financial support from family members

Notably, Shapiro and colleagues did not find the wealth gap to be a consequence of behavioral differences, such as consumption patterns or the propensity to build savings. It is also not solely a function of income differentials. Instead, the researchers were able to explain two-thirds of the wealth gap using these five factors. Years of homeownership accounted for 27 percent of the difference, household income for 20 percent, unemployment for 9 percent, and college education and inheritances for 5 percent each (Shapiro, Meschede, and Osoro 2013).

Figure 10-4 presents an explanation of the gap between Black and White wealth. Many people would expect household income to account for the differences in wealth. However, as we have seen, income differences can explain only a portion of wealth inequalities. And although it is true that college education makes it easier to build up wealth, the fact that White

people are more likely to be college educated accounts for only 5 percent of the differences in wealth between White and Black households.

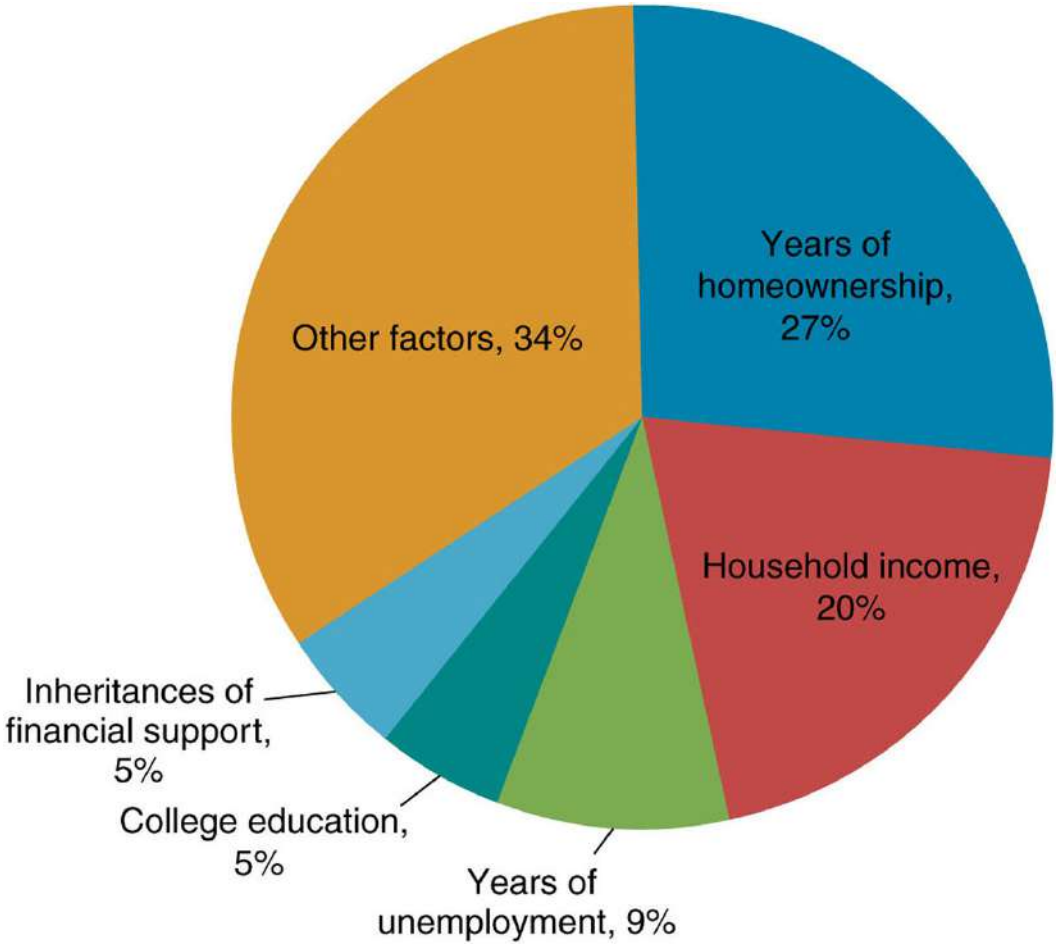


FIGURE 10-4 How Do We Explain the Black/White Wealth Gap Today? Source: Shapiro, Meschede, and Osoro (2013).

In a follow-up study, Amy Traub et al. (2017) found that the factors many people think explain wealth inequality, such as education and out-of-wedlock birth, in fact do not. White adults with less than a high school education who had children but were not married and who did not work full time had more wealth on average than Black and Latinx adults who were married, completed higher levels of education, or worked longer hours. For example, among households under age 55, the median White high school dropout has a similar amount of wealth to the median Black or Latinx adult who graduated high school and attended some college.

Additionally, White adults who attended college have 7.2 times more wealth than their African American counterparts and 3.9 times more than their Latinx counterparts.

Years of homeownership accounted for the largest portion of the differences in wealth between White and Black families. African American families tend to purchase homes later in life because they face more obstacles in home buying than White people. Further, Black homeowners are less likely to build up equity over the years because of residential segregation, and White families are more likely to receive financial assistance in purchasing a home from their family members. Even though homeownership accounts for, on average, 53 percent of the wealth Black families have, compared with 39 percent for White people, the return on investment in housing turns out to be far greater for White than for Black households (Shapiro, Meschede, and Osoro 2013). Black families who are able to purchase homes face outright discrimination by real estate agents who continue to steer them to Black neighborhoods and by lenders who quote them higher interest rates. The limited market potential for homes in primarily Black neighborhoods inhibits the possibility for the value of these homes to increase, and the higher interest rates make it more difficult for Black people to pay off their mortgages quickly. These factors work together to reduce the home equity of Black people, thereby enhancing the wealth gap (Krivo and Kaufman 2004).

The foreclosure crisis of 2007–2009 further decimated Black and Latinx wealth portfolios. A study by the Center for Responsible Lending (Bocian, Li, and Ernst 2010) found that among recent borrowers, nearly 8 percent of Black and Latinx homeowners lost their homes, compared with 4.5 percent of White people. Nearly two-thirds of all foreclosures between 2005 and 2008 were on homes mortgaged using subprime loans, meaning that people with subprime loans were three times as likely to experience a foreclosure than people with conventional or government loans. And Black and Latinx borrowers were the most likely to get subprime loans with unfavorable conditions (Bocian et al. 2010).

White people and Black people at similar income levels tend to have vastly different wealth portfolios. One reason is that White people are more likely to have jobs with benefits. This means that they are less likely to dip into their savings for medical emergencies and that their employers are more likely to be contributing to a retirement plan (Shapiro et al. 2013). Black people also tend to be in more precarious employment situations and are more likely to lose their jobs. When unemployment rose from 5.0 percent in December 2007 to 9.5 percent in June 2009, Latinx and Black people were hit the hardest, with Black unemployment rates peaking at 15.6 percent and the Latinx rate at 12.6 percent in 2009 (Kochhar et al. 2011).

The 2013 study by Shapiro and his colleagues found that 36 percent of White households inherited some money over the twenty-five-year period under study, compared with only 7 percent of Black households. Moreover, the inheritances Black households received were, on average, only about 10 percent of the amount inherited by White households. Inheritances are thus another important part of the legacy of inequality in the United States.

Wealth researchers such as john powell (2008) and Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro (2006) make a case for **asset-based social policies** that are designed to help narrow the wealth gap. These researchers contend that the FHA policies of the early twentieth century set the stage for the wealth gap and that now the United States has the responsibility of reversing that trend by setting up proactive policies. These policies could include individual-level assistance in buying homes as well as larger-scale efforts such as improvements to transportation and investments in neighborhoods. For example, if the local, state, or federal government invested money in a working-class Black neighborhood by building a transportation hub, transforming empty lots into parks, and revitalizing the business district, this would increase property values and provide job opportunities for the local community, thereby enhancing their wealth portfolios. It would take enormous investments to reverse the trend, but

that is primarily because of the decades of investment the federal government has put into White communities.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Ten Myths about Closing the Racial Wealth Gap

In 2018, William Darity and several of his colleagues issued a report called “What We Get Wrong About Closing the Wealth Gap.” Inspired both by the significant racial wealth gap as well as a lack of public understanding about the nature of this gap, this report aims to challenge the conventional wisdom on the racial wealth gap. Part of this report is excerpted below.

…

We challenge the conventional set of claims that are made about the racial wealth gap in the United States. We contend that the cause of the gap must be found in the structural characteristics of the American economy, heavily infused at every point with both an inheritance of racism and the ongoing authority of white supremacy.

Blacks cannot close the racial wealth gap by changing their individual behavior –i.e. by assuming more “personal responsibility” or acquiring the portfolio management insights associated with “financially literacy”—if the structural sources of racial inequality remain unchanged. There are no actions that black Americans can take unilaterally that will have much of an effect on reducing the racial wealth gap. For the gap to be closed, America must undergo a vast social transformation produced by the adoption of bold national policies, policies that will forge a way forward by addressing, finally, the long-standing consequences of slavery, the Jim Crow years that followed, and ongoing racism and discrimination that exist in our society today.

Our report indicates that closing the racial wealth gap requires an accurate assessment of the causes of the disparity and imaginative action to produce systemic reform and lasting change.

Addressing racial wealth inequality will require a major redistributive effort or another major public policy intervention to build black American wealth. This could take the form of a direct

race-specific initiative like a dramatic reparations program tied to compensation for the legacies of slavery and Jim Crow, and/or an initiative that addresses the perniciousness of wealth inequality for the entire American population, which could disproportionately benefit black Americans due to their exceptionally low levels of wealth. Indeed, the two strategies—reparations for America's record of racial injustice or the provision of the equivalent of a substantial trust fund for every wealth poor American—need not be mutually exclusive.

In what follows, we come to grips with the ten most important, widely held myths about closing the racial wealth gap.

Myth 1: **Greater educational attainment or more work effort on the part of blacks will close the racial wealth gap.**

At every level of educational attainment, the median wealth among black families is substantially lower than white families. White households with a bachelor's degree or post-graduate education (such as with a Ph.D., MD, and JD) are more than three times as wealthy as black households with the same degree attainment.

Myth 2: **The racial homeownership gap is the "driver" of the racial wealth gap.**

Among households that own a home, white households have nearly $140,000 more in net worth than black households. While the wealth ratio between whites and blacks may narrow somewhat among those who own a home, a six-figure wealth differential remains. Clearly increased homeownership is far from sufficient to close the racial wealth gap.

Myth 3: **Buying and banking black will close the wealth gap.**

Black-owned also are miniscule in the context of the general scale of American banking. The largest five black owned banks recently were estimated to have assets totaling $2.3 billion, while J.P. Morgan alone had an estimated $2 trillion in assets. Thus, the top five black banks' assets were a tiny 0.1 percent of Morgan's assets. This indicates that the existing infrastructure of black-owned banks lacks the capacity to produce wide and substantial increases in black wealth. … Moreover, since black wealth is so low in the first place, it is a mere fantasy to anticipate that the existing black consumer base could build a black-owned equivalent of J.P. Morgan by banking black.

Myth 4: **Black people saving more will close the racial wealth gap.**

The finding advanced in peer reviewed articles in economic journals is clear: there is no evidence that black Americans have a lower savings rate than white Americans once household income is taken into account.

Myth 5: **Greater financial literacy will close the racial wealth gap.**

Evidence put forth to make the case for black financial illiteracy includes blacks' disproportionate use of alternative financial service products, like payday loans, auto-title loans, and check cashing institutions. These financial services have fees and interest payments that far exceed more conventional options. Meager economic circumstances—not poor decision making or deficient knowledge—constrain choices and leave asset-poor borrowers with

little to no other option but to use predatory and abusive alternative financial services.

Myth 6: **Entrepreneurship will close the racial wealth gap.**

When we compile the data even those members of marginalized communities who manage to enter into entrepreneurship largely fail. This is due to a number of factors ranging from under-capitalization, limited market access, or outright theft or destruction. Blacks are far less likely to own a business, and for blacks that do own a business they have far less equity.

Myth 7: **Emulating successful minorities will close the racial wealth gap.**

In the past, much of what is commonly referred to as the "model minority" narrative has relied on the perceived bootstrap success of American Jews and other southern European immigrant groups, and, more recently, select Asian, Latino, Caribbean and African immigrant communities.

The argument that intergroup disparities in wealth are borne out of group based cultural/behavioral deficiencies is misleading and misdirected. Instead, we should focus on the long exposure of low wealth racial/ethnic groups to theft of wealth and blockades on wealth accumulation. To suggest that blacks, racialized Latinos and Native Americans should emulate other supposedly successful "minority" groups perpetuates, the false narrative that their asset poverty is due to a lack of hard work, effort, or ambition.

Myth 8: **Improved "soft skills" and "personal responsibility" will close the racial wealth gap.**

[Our previous research] found that when taking educational attainment into account, black men are overrepresented in low wage jobs that require interpersonal contact and underrepresented in higher-paying jobs that do not require these “soft skills.” Their absence from the construction industry affords powerful evidence against Myth 8. Black men already are largely located in service sector jobs that require, or depend, on “soft-skills.” It is not “soft skills” requirements that distinguish black and white male sites of employment. It is relatively lower pay in the jobs held by the former and relatively higher pay in jobs held by the latter.

Myth 9: **The growing numbers of black celebrities prove the racial wealth gap is closing.**

Unfortunately, from “The Cosby Show” to Michael Jackson’s multi-platinum albums to Will Smith’s meteoric rise to the present day mega couple Jay-Z and Beyoncé, black celebrity has masked black poverty, rather than contributed to closing the racial wealth gap. The absolute number of black CEOs of Fortune 500 companies has dwindled from eight in 2015 to four in 2017. And black Americans make up just 2.6 percent of those holding posts within striking distance of corporate chief executive suites. To push toward closing the racial wealth gap, the veil of black celebrity must be pulled back enabling all Americans to understand there is no racial meritocracy in wealth, despite what is displayed on television networks from ESPN to BET.

Myth 10: **Black family disorganization is a cause of the racial wealth gap.**

There are substantial differences in living arrangements of children by race and ethnicity. Most white (72 percent) and Asian-American (82 percent) children still are being raised by two married parents, as are 55 percent of Latino children. In sharp contrast, only 31

percent of black children are living with two married parents, while more than half (54 percent) are being raised by a single-parent. The increasing rate of single parent households is often invoked to explain growing inequality, and the prevalence of black single motherhood is often seen as a driver of racial wealth inequities. These explanations tend to confuse consequence and cause and are largely driven by claims that if blacks change their behavior, they would see marked increases in wealth accumulation. This is a dangerous narrative that is steeped in racist stereotypes.

Marriage does little to help equalize wealth among white and black women with a college degree. For example, married white women without a bachelor's degree are in households where they have more than two and a half times the wealth of married black women with a degree. Racial wealth disparities widen among married women with a bachelor's degree; married white women are in households that have more than five times the amount of wealth as their black counterparts. White households with a single white parent have more than two times the net worth of two parent black households.

	No Bachelor's Degree				With Bachelor's Degree			
	Married		Single		Married		Single	
Age	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
20–29	$4,000	$13,000	$0	$2,000	$7,700	$18,700	$–11,000	$3,400
30–39	$12,000	$33,450	$0	$0	$–20,500	$97,000	$0	$7,500
40–49	$22,501	$60,000	$1,000	$3,006	$12,000	$195,000	$6,000	$25,000
50–59	$38,000	$155,000	$2,000	$8,200	$198,000	$430,000	$9,500	$117,500
60+	$89,500	$344,000	$12,000	$60,000	$424,000	$778,000	$11,000	$384,400

FIGURE 10-5 Medium Household Net Worth of Women by Age

Source: Darity et al. 2018.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 10.4: Explaining the Wealth Gap in the Twenty-First Century

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Conclusion and Discussion

In this chapter, we have seen how wealth inequalities are entrenched and complex. Married White couples with college educations are well positioned to accumulate wealth over the course of their lives. However, married Black couples with the same levels of education consistently earn less money and have much less wealth. Wealth provides a safety net for emergencies, such as serious medical issues or the loss of a job. This means that comfortably middle-class Black families are at a much greater risk of descending into poverty than similarly placed White families. Not all White families have wealth, but historical racial disparities in the United States, as well as ongoing discriminatory practices, ensure that White families are more likely to accumulate wealth than Black and Latinx families.

Wealth also provides opportunities and allows families to invest in their future and to take risks. Families with substantial home equity can use this asset to finance their children's college educations. Families with significant savings and a wide social net can use them to take risks and invest in business opportunities. In these and other ways, wealth begets more wealth. For these reasons, wealth inequality is hard to overcome.

Between 1933 and 1978, federal government policies enabled over thirty-five million families – nearly all White - to purchase homes in new suburban areas. As a direct consequence of these policies, these families will pass on trillions of dollars of wealth to their children through accumulated home equity. Nearly all these families are White because non-White Americans were locked out of this tremendous wealth-generating federal program. Today, most Black families have no wealth to pass on to their children. For this reason, many activists contend that it is time for the federal government to enact new wealth-generating programs

that, unlike past programs, are not exclusive to White Americans (Oliver and Shapiro 2006).

SELF-ASSESSMENT 10.5: Conclusion and Discussion

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

10.1 What are the historical reasons for housing and wealth inequalities in the United States?

- Enslaved African Americans were unable to accumulate wealth. Once freed, their opportunities for land ownership were limited.

Review

» What does slavery have to do with contemporary wealth inequalities?

Critical Thinking

» In the United States, why does the idea endure that if you work hard, you will get ahead? Why might this not be true, especially for people of color?

» Have any of the federal programs mentioned in this chapter helped your family accumulate wealth? How has your family's race, class, and immigration history played a role in the accumulation of wealth in your family?

10.2 When and how did residential segregation become a characteristic of U.S. cities?

- Today, most U.S. cities are segregated, but this has not always been the case.
- Residential segregation was created in the early twentieth century by White residents who desired homogeneous

neighborhoods, profit seeking by the real estate industry, and federal housing programs that were exclusively available to White people.

- White people are the only group that, on average, lives in primarily White neighborhoods.
- Black families are the most likely group to be hypersegregated.

Review

» What factors contributed to the creation of residential segregation?

» How is residential segregation related to the racial wealth gap?

Critical Thinking

» Why is racial segregation problematic? Provide at least three separate reasons.

10.3 What is the extent of wealth inequalities today in homeownership and beyond?

- On average, African American and Latinx people have less than 9 percent of the wealth of White people. The 2007–2009 housing crisis exacerbated racial inequalities in wealth.

Review

» What is the difference between wealth and income? Why is this difference important in studies of racial inequality?

» Why and how did the wealth gap between White people and other groups change between 2005 and 2009?

Critical Thinking

» What distinct social challenges stem from overall wealth

inequality and the racial wealth gap?

10.4 What factors are perpetuating and exacerbating wealth inequalities?

- Black families with incomes similar to those of White families have substantially less wealth. This is because wealth is not solely a function of income differentials. The disparity is also attributable to years of homeownership, years of unemployment, college education, and inheritances.

Review

» What programs and policies have contributed to the racial wealth gap, and in what ways?

» What other factors have exacerbated the wealth gap in the twenty-first century? Give examples.

Critical Thinking

» To what extent would narrowing the racial income gap contribute to narrowing the racial wealth gap?

» How would asset-based social policies work in practice? Could they work?

Talking about Race

The overall wealth inequality between White families and African American or Latinx families is staggering. Citing this issue is one way to broach the topic of racial inequality. After reading this chapter, have a discussion with family and friends, mentioning that White families have, on average, over ten times the wealth of African American or Latinx families. Highlight historical reasons for this disparity. How would you respond to potential comments or questions about African American or Latinx people's spending habits or educational levels? What empirical evidence could you use to make your case?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 10.6: Check Your Understanding

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

LIST OF KEY TERMS

asset-based social policies

assets

blockbusting

dissimilarity index

Federal Housing Administration (FHA)

hypersegregated

isolation index

Predatory lenders

racially restrictive covenants

redlining

Residential segregation

segregation index

steering

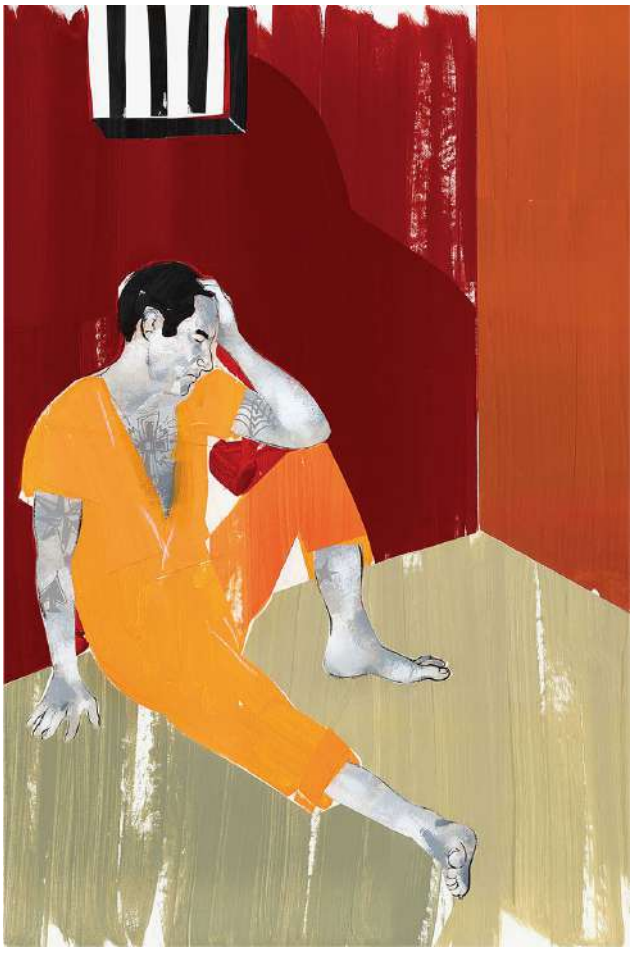
subprime loans

Wealth

11

Racism and the Criminal Justice System

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced



Man sitting on floor of jail cell. Ilana Kohn. (*Copyright Ilana kohn/Ikon Images*)

As You Read

- **11.1** What factors explain the rise of mass incarceration in the United States?
- **11.2** How are disparities in the criminal justice system reflective of institutional racism?
- **11.3** How is the rise of mass incarceration tied to large-scale economic trends?
- **11.4** What are the collateral consequences of mass incarceration?

In this excerpt from his essay “Why We Won’t Wait,” historian Robin D. G. Kelley considers what happened as the nation waited for the grand jury to indict Darren Wilson, the police officer who killed Michael Brown. At the end of three months of listening to 5,000 pages of testimony from 60 witnesses, the grand jury decided not to indict Darren Wilson.

As we waited for the grand jury’s decision, a twelve-year-old Black boy named Tamir Rice was shot and killed by police in Cleveland because the officer mistook his toy gun for a real one. Tamir was playing outside of Cleveland’s Cudell Recreation Center, one of the few public facilities left that provide safe space for children.

As we waited, Cleveland cops took the life of Tanisha Anderson, a 37-year-old Black woman suffering from bipolar disorder. Police arrived at her home after family members called 911 to help her through a difficult crisis, but rather than treat her empathetically they did what they were trained to do when confronted with Black bodies in Black neighborhoods—they treated her like an enemy combatant. When she became agitated, one officer wrestled her to the ground and cuffed her while a second officer pinned her “face down on the ground with his knee pressed down heavily into the back for 6 to 7 minutes, until her body went completely limp.” She stopped breathing. They made no effort to administer CPR, telling the family and witnesses that she was sleeping. When the ambulance finally arrived twenty minutes later, she was dead.

As we waited, police in Ann Arbor, Michigan, killed a forty-year-old Black woman named Aura Rain Rosser. She was reportedly brandishing a kitchen knife when the cops showed up on a domestic violence call, although her boyfriend who made the initial report insisted that she was no threat to the officers. No matter; they opened fire anyway.

As we waited, a Chicago police officer fatally shot 19-year-old Roshad McIntosh. Despite the officer’s claims,

several eyewitnesses reported that McIntosh was unarmed, on his knees with his hands up, begging the officer to hold his fire.

As we waited, police in Saratoga Springs, Utah, pumped six bullets into Darrien Hunt, a 22-year-old Black man dressed kind of like a ninja and carrying a replica Samurai sword. And police in Victorville, California, killed Dante Parker, a 36-year-old Black man and father of five. He had been stopped while riding his bike on suspicion of burglary. When he became “uncooperative,” the officers repeatedly used Tasers to try to subdue him. He died from his injuries.

As we waited, a twenty-eight-year-old Black man named Akai Gurley met a similar fate as he descended a stairwell in the Louis H. Pink Houses in East New York, Brooklyn. The police were on a typical reconnaissance mission through the housing project. Officer Peter Liang negotiated the darkened stairwell, gun drawn in one hand, flashlight in the other, prepared to take down any threat he encountered. According to liberal mayor Bill DeBlasio and police chief Bill Bratton, Mr. Gurley was collateral damage. Apologies abound. He left a two-year-old daughter.

As we waited, LAPD officers stopped 25-year-old Ezell Ford, a mentally challenged Black man, in his own South Los Angeles neighborhood and shot him to death. The LAPD stopped Omar Abrego, a 37-year-old father from Los Angeles, and beat him to death.

And as we waited and waited and waited, Darren Wilson got married, continued to earn a paycheck while on leave, and received over $400,000 worth of donations for his “defense.”

You see, we’ve been waiting for dozens, hundreds, thousands of indictments and convictions. Every death hurts. Every exonerated cop, security guard, or vigilante enrages. The grand jury’s decision doesn’t surprise most

> Black people because we are not waiting for an *indictment*. We are waiting for justice—or more precisely, struggling for justice. We all know the names and how they died. Eric Garner, Kajieme Powell, Vonderitt D. Meyers, Jr., John Crawford III, Cary Ball Jr., Mike Brown, ad infinitum. They were unarmed and shot down by police under circumstances for which lethal force was unnecessary. We hold their names like recurring nightmares, accumulating the dead like ghoulish baseball cards. Except that there is no trading. No forgetting. Just a stack of dead bodies that rises every time we blink. For the last three generations, Eleanor Bumpurs, Michael Stewart, Eula Love, Amadu Diallo, Oscar Grant, Patrick Dorismond, Malice Green, Tyisha Miller, Sean Bell, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, Margaret LaVerne Mitchell, to name a few, have become symbols of racist police violence. And I'm only speaking of the dead—not the harassed, the beaten, the humiliated, the stopped-and-frisked, the raped.
>
> *Source: Kelley 2014.*

Writing at the turn of the twentieth century, W. E. B. DuBois likened the prison system to "slavery in private hands" (1904, 2). He explained that with the end of slavery, the numbers of Black convicts in the South rose substantially, in large part because of vagrancy laws passed in the aftermath of emancipation. Police officers often used vagrancy laws to arrest African Americans whom they perceived to be vagrants or drifters. African Americans' testimonies in courts were largely ignored, and any accusation by White people could result in conviction. Southern states, however, were not able to build prisons fast enough to house these new convicts. Thus, a convict-lease system was born, whereby convicts could be leased to the highest bidder to work as slaves. This practice was legal because the Thirteenth Amendment allows forced labor as a punishment for crime. Notably, in our present system, prisons still can (and do) force prisoners to work for little or no pay.

Convict leasing was a system of both forced labor and social control. Today, prisons do not function to the same extent as a source of unpaid labor, yet the element of social control persists. One place we can see this is in the lifelong stigma attached to being labeled a felon. As Michelle Alexander (2010) explains, this stigma makes various forms of racial discrimination legal. Felons face discrimination in housing, employment, and access to social services.

This chapter elaborates on these and other ways mass incarceration is a tool of social control, and how this crime control strategy has disproportionately affected people of color. The evidence presented makes it clear that mass incarceration not only is ineffective at preventing crime, but also has been particularly detrimental to communities of color across the United States. This chapter begins with a discussion of mass incarceration and then moves to an analysis of institutionalized racism in the criminal justice system. It concludes with a consideration of the economic and collateral consequences of mass incarceration.

The United States has more people in prison than any other country in the world and today incarcerates people at a higher rate than at any other time in history. Our crime rate, however, is not higher than that of other countries or than it has been historically. Why, then, are so many Americans behind bars? The answer lies in the United States' use of mass incarceration as a strategy to reduce crime even though mass incarceration has not been effective at reducing crime. It has, however, destroyed families and communities and exacerbated racial inequality because the primary victims of intensified law enforcement efforts have been people of color.

Mass Incarceration in the United States

An understanding of the racially disparate consequences of the criminal justice system in the United States must begin with an exploration of the uniqueness of this system. The United States is distinctive among wealthier nations in its liberal use of the prison system. While drugs such as marijuana and cocaine have been decriminalized in western Europe, the United States has enhanced the punishments for use of illicit drugs. Repeat offender laws and mandatory sentencing have meant that in the United States, many people spend years behind bars for nonviolent crimes. Because of the racially disparate implementation and character of these laws, their impact is most visible in Black and Latinx communities.

The Rise of Mass Incarceration

Mass incarceration is a relatively new phenomenon in the United States and marks a divergence from the attitudes and practices of the mid-twentieth century. At that time, Americans tended to view incarceration as an ineffective means of controlling crime and searched for other solutions to make communities safer. Prison was seen as a last resort, and accordingly, the Federal Bureau of Prisons planned to close large prisons in Kansas, Washington, and Georgia. In 1970, Congress voted to eliminate nearly all federal mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenders, as most Americans viewed drug addiction as a problem of public health, not criminal justice (Alexander 2010).

In the United States, prisons are crowded with nonviolent offenders.

Just ten years later, this mindset—that drugs are a public health problem and prisons are barbaric—was pushed to the margins as a policy of mass incarceration took off. Many scholars attribute the start of this change to the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968. This law was the convergence of liberal and conservative anticrime agendas, as both parties realized that anticrime rhetoric could win elections. Parties began to compete with one another over who could be tougher on crime, and this competition led to a surge in incarceration rates (Murakawa 2014; Gottschalk 2015).

The U.S. incarceration rate was about 1 per 1,000 residents for almost the entire twentieth century until the 1970s. That rate doubled between 1972 and 1984, and again between 1984 and 1994. By the end of the twentieth century, the United States had an unprecedented number of inmates: over 2 million, more than ten times the number of U.S. inmates at any time prior to the 1970s. Today, "the American criminal justice system holds almost 2.3 million people in 1,833 state prisons, 110 federal prisons,

1,772 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,134 local jails, 218 immigration detention facilities, and 80 Indian Country jails as well as in military prisons, civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals, and prisons in the U.S. territories" (Sawyer and Wagner 2020). The increase in incarceration cannot be explained by a rise in crime, as crime rates have fluctuated independently of incarceration rates (Wacquant 2009; Gottschalk 2015). Incarceration rates soared because the laws changed, making a wider variety of crimes punishable by incarceration and lengthening sentences for those incarcerated. By 2008, 1 in 32 U.S. adult residents were under correctional supervision. Just as laws and policies changed to reach this peak or incarceration, laws have slowly begun to change again. By 2018, 1 in 40 adults were under correctional supervision, the lowest rate since 1993. At the end of 2018, 6,410,000 people were under correctional supervision in the United States, and 2,123,100 were incarcerated (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2020; Figures 11-1 and 11-2).

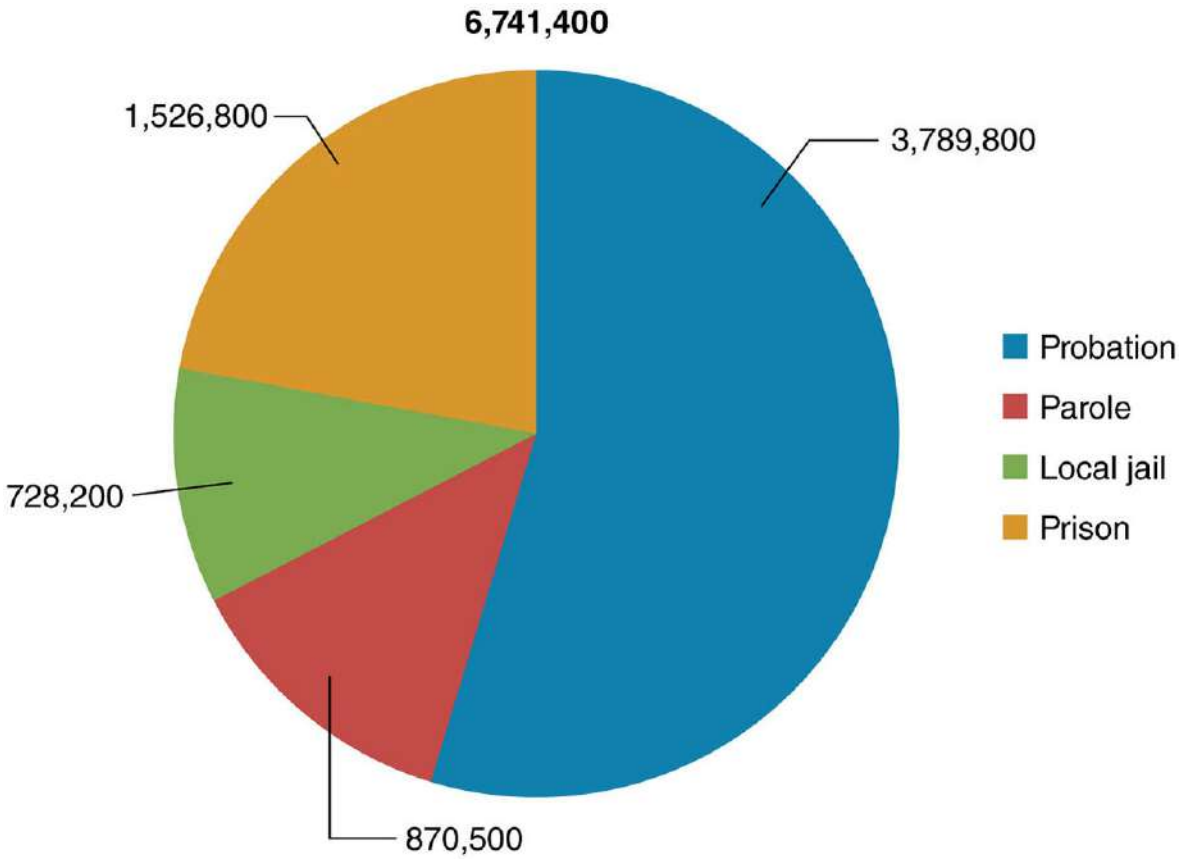


FIGURE 11-1 Total U.S. Adult Correctional Population, 2015 Source: Prison Policy Initiative.

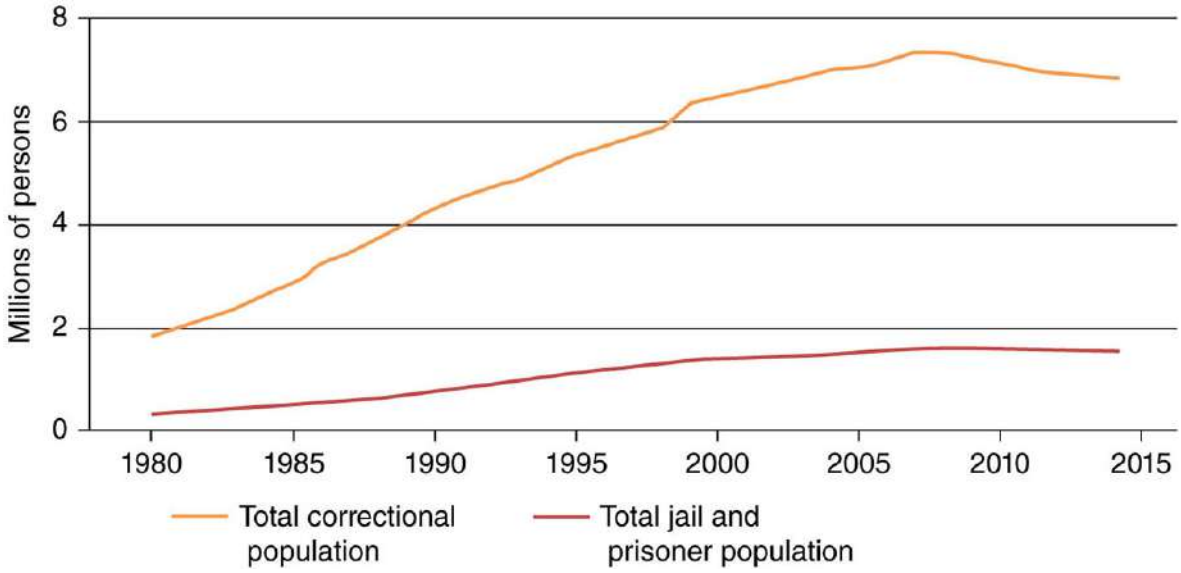


FIGURE 11-2 Total U.S. Adult Incarcerated Population, 1980–2015 Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016).

Mass Incarceration in a Global Context

The United States stands alone in its rate of incarceration. In 2017, 666 of every 100,000 U.S. residents were incarcerated—a rate nearly eight times that of western Europe's average rate of 84 per 100,000 residents (Walmsley 2017). The U.S. prison population also dwarfs that of other, larger, countries, including China, in terms of sheer numbers. According to the World Prison Brief (2020), the United States had over 2 million people behind bars. The next largest incarcerated population was in China, with 1,710,000 prisoners, followed by Brazil (773,151) and Russia, with 511,030 prisoners. No other country incarcerates more than a half a million people. Iceland, for example, had only 131 people behind bars.

The so-called War on Drugs in the United States accounts for much of this disparity. In the United States, a moral panic erupted in the 1980s surrounding the emergence of crack cocaine, which led to harsh laws

against selling or possessing crack and other narcotics. These laws in turn resulted in historically and globally unprecedented rates of imprisonment for drug sales and possession (Gottschalk 2016). In most other developed countries, a first-time drug offense leads to no more than six months in jail, and rehabilitation is more common than criminalization. In the United States, the typical mandatory minimum sentence in federal court for a first-time drug offense is five or ten years (Alexander 2010). At the state level, there are even more extreme examples: in Florida, illegal possession of 100 grams or more of the painkiller hydrocodone (one of the most frequently prescribed drugs in the United States) leads to a twenty-five-year mandatory minimum sentence (Riggs 2014). With more people in jail on drug charges for longer periods of time, the U.S. incarceration rate has risen far beyond that of other countries. As shown in Figure 11-3, Russia is the only European country with an incarceration rate remotely close to that of the United States. The United States has an incarceration rate seven times higher than that of other developed countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Denmark (Walmsley 2017).

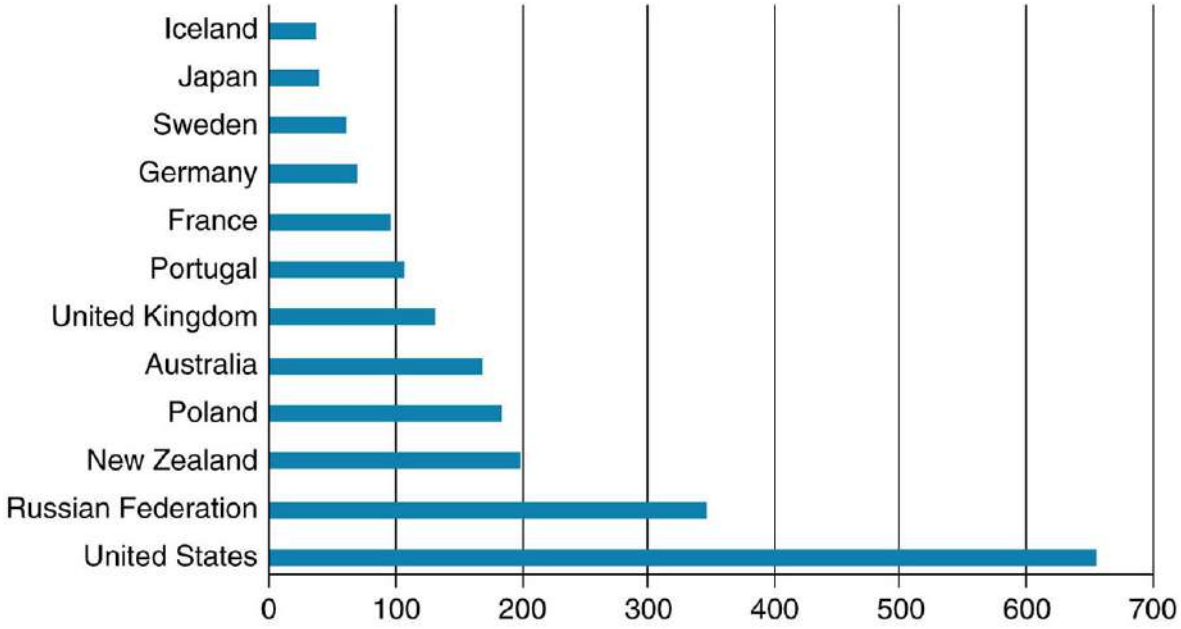


FIGURE 11-3 International Comparison of Incarceration Rates (per 100,000), 2020
Source: World Prison Brief.

GLOBAL VIEW

Prisons in Germany and the Netherlands

Germany and the Netherlands incarcerate people at about one-tenth the rate of the United States. Moreover, their prisoners live in better conditions, and the primary aim of their corrections systems is social reintegration—not punishment. The prison systems in Germany and the Netherlands are designed to ensure that, when released, former convicts are able to reintegrate into society and live life without committing more crimes.

In these countries, incarceration is a strategy of last resort. Both rely heavily on punishments that do not require time behind bars, such as community service, fines, or diversion programs. The fines imposed are based on a convict's income. In 2010, in Germany, 70 percent of convictions involved the imposition of a fine, and only 6 percent involved incarceration. By comparison, in the United States, 21 percent of convictions involved fines, and 70 percent involved incarceration.

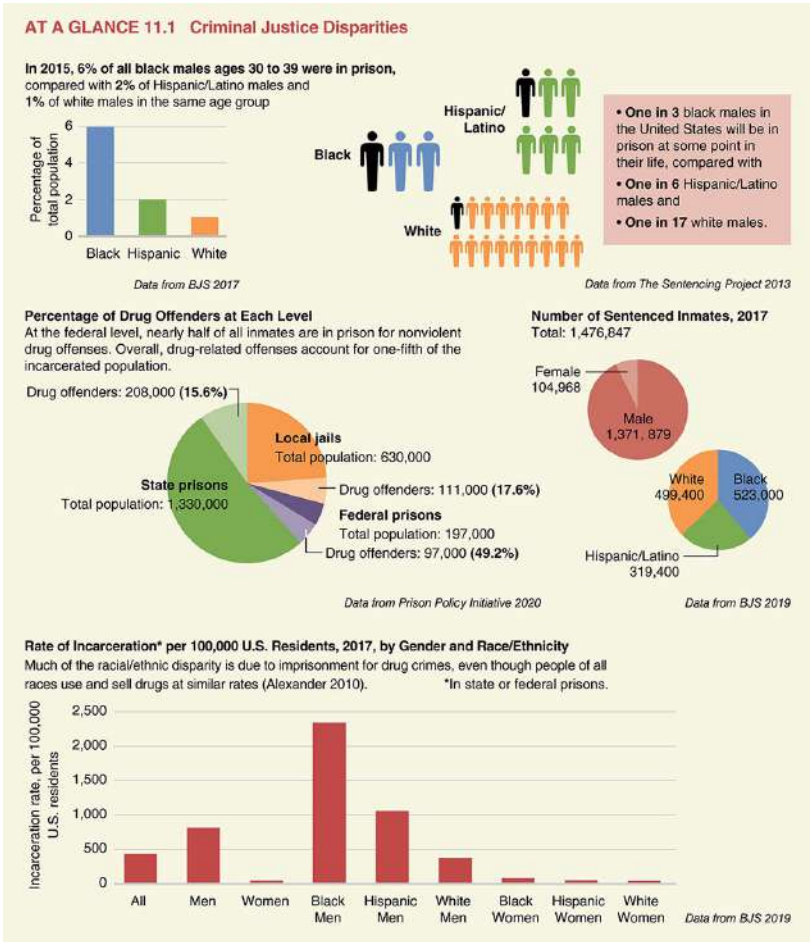
Typical sentences are also much longer in the United States. In 2012, 91 percent of prison sentences in the Netherlands were for twelve months or less, and less than 5 percent of Dutch sentences were for over two years. In the United States, in contrast, the average prison sentence is three years. Once released from prison, offenders in Germany and the Netherlands do not face any of the collateral consequences we see in the United States, such as voting or welfare restrictions.

In a report issued by the Vera Institute (Subramanian and Shames 2013), the authors recommend that the United States adopt some of these practices, particularly for nonviolent offenders, who make up the majority of the prison population in the United States.

Source: Subramanian and Shames 2013.

Race and Mass Incarceration

When we consider racial disparities in the U.S. incarceration rate, the picture becomes even more unsettling. Although 13 percent of the population of the United States is Black, Black people make up 30 percent of those imprisoned. Hispanics account for about 18 percent of the U.S. population but represent 22 percent of the nation's prison population (Kovera 2019). At year-end 2017, the imprisonment rate of Black males was 2,336 per every 100,000 in the population, as compared to 397 per 100,000 White males. Black males were six times as likely to be incarcerated as White males by the end of 2017 (Bronson and Carson 2019). At a Glance 11.1 shows these rates by race and gender.


AT A GLANCE 11.1 Criminal Justice Disparities
In 2015, 6% of all black males ages 30 to 39 were in prison, compared with 2% of Hispanic/Latino males and 1% of white males in the same age group
Percentage of total population
6
4
2
0
Black Hispanic White
Data from BJS 2017
Black
Hispanic/ Latino
White
• One in 3 black males in the United States will be in prison at some point in their life, compared with
• One in 6 Hispanic/Latino males and
• One in 17 white males.
Data from The Sentencing Project 2013
Percentage of Drug Offenders at Each Level
At the federal level, nearly half of all inmates are in prison for nonviolent drug offenses. Overall, drug-related offenses account for one-fifth of the incarcerated population.
Drug offenders: 208,000 (15.6%)
Local jails
Total population: 630,000
State prisons
Total population: 1,330,000
Drug offenders: 111,000 (17.6%)
Federal prisons
Total population: 197,000
Drug offenders: 97,000 (49.2%)
Data from Prison Policy Initiative 2020
Number of Sentenced Inmates, 2017
Total: 1,476,847
Female 104,968
Male 1,371, 879
White 499,400
Black 523,000
Hispanic/Latino 319,400
Data from BJS 2019
Rate of Incarceration* per 100,000 U.S. Residents, 2017, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity
Much of the racial/ethnic disparity is due to imprisonment for drug crimes, even though people of all races use and sell drugs at similar rates (Alexander 2010). *In state or federal prisons.
Incarceration rate, per 100,000 U.S. residents
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
All
Men
Women
Black Men
Hispanic Men
White Men
Black Women
Hispanic Women
White Women
Data from BJS 2019

Much of the disparity is due to imprisonment for drug crimes, even though people of all races use and sell drugs at similar rates (Alexander

2010). This disparity has increased over time. In 1975, the ratio of Black to White arrests for drug crimes was 2 to 1. By 1990, the ratio was 5 to 1, even though there is no evidence that Black people began to use or sell drugs at higher rates than White people during this period (Wacquant 2009).

By the end of the twentieth century, Black men were seven times more likely than White men to go to prison. Over the course of a Black man's life, he is more likely to go to prison than to get a bachelor's degree or join the military. Whereas a White man is ten times more likely to get a college degree than to go to prison, a Black man is nearly twice as likely to end up in prison than to finish college. Imprisonment has become an expected life outcome for some Black men: onein every three Black males in the United States will be in prison at some point in his life, compared with one in every six Latinx males, and one in every seventeen White males (The Sentencing Project 2013). The number of incarcerated women has also increased over the past few decades—at a rate 50 percent higher than that of men since 1980 (The Sentencing Project 2016).

Chapter 11.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

The Inefficacy of Mass Incarceration

In the 1970s, incarceration became the most popular crime control strategy in the United States. However, state-level incarceration trends provide limited evidence that incarceration is an effective strategy to control crime. Between 1998 and 2003, some states greatly increased the number of people they sent to prison, while other states did not. The average decrease in crime rates in these states, however, was similar. Additionally, the states with higher increases in incarceration did not

experience more substantial declines in their crime rates (King, Mauer, and Young 2005).

Incarceration has had a limited impact on crime rates for two reasons. First, it is just one of many factors that influence crime rates: changes in the economy, fluctuations in the drug market, and community-level responses often have more pronounced effects. Second, there are diminishing returns from incarceration: incarcerating repeat violent offenders takes them off the streets and thus reduces crime, whereas incarcerating nonviolent offenders has a minimal effect on crime rates (King et al. 2005).

The rates of incarceration began to increase in the 1970s, during a time when violent and property crime rates were high. Even though crime rates began to fall in 1993, incarceration rates and populations continued to rise for another decade. Some of the most draconian laws were passed in the mid-1990s, after crime rates had started falling. Figures 11-4 and 11-5 provide a visual representation of how violent crime and property crime rates have decreased since 1993.

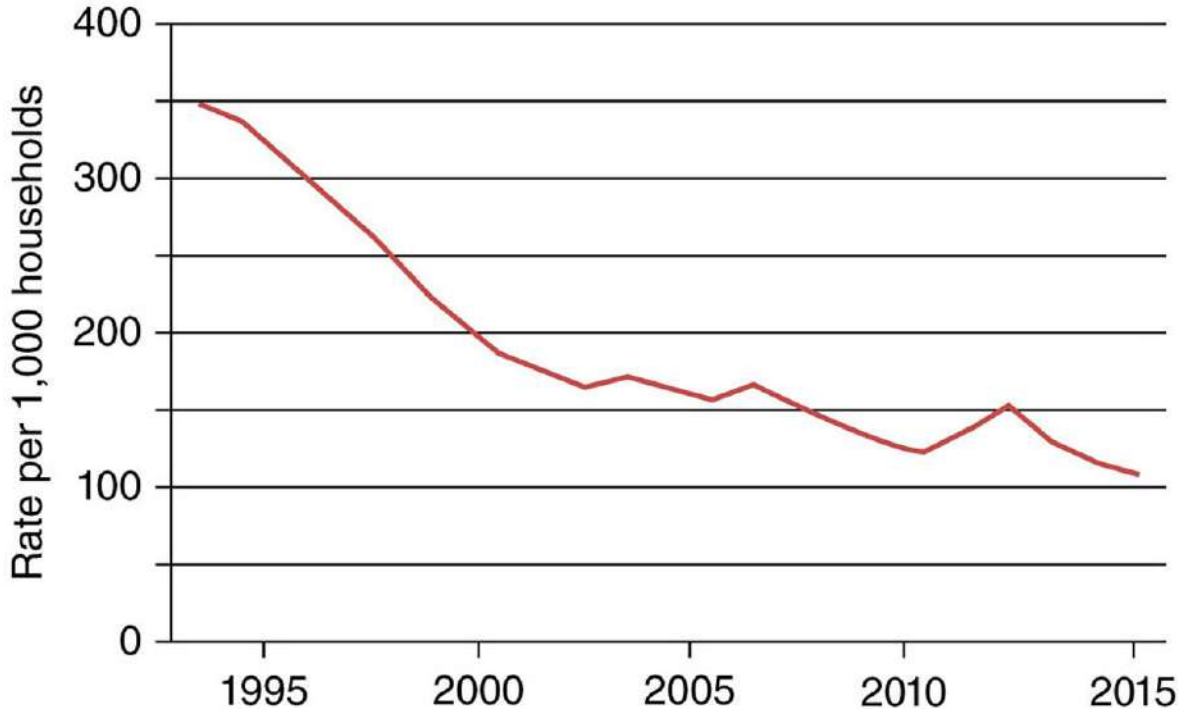


FIGURE 11.4 Property Victimization Rate, 1993–2015 Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016).

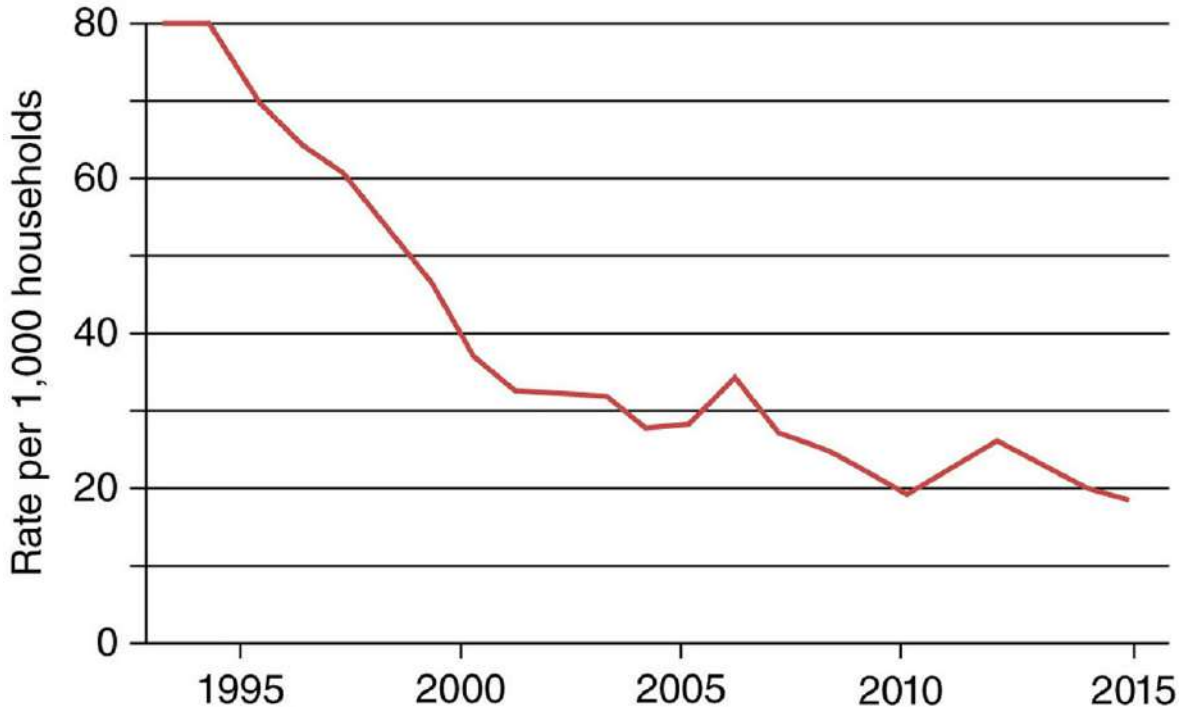


FIGURE 11-5 Violent Victimization Rate, 1993–2015 Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016).

Despite the low efficacy of imprisoning nonviolent offenders, this is the segment of the prison population that has grown the fastest. Between 1970 and 2000, incarceration rates in the United States increased five-fold, in large part because of legislation designed to fight drugs. As a result of the War on Drugs, the number of people incarcerated for drug offenses in the U.S. skyrocketed from 40,900 in 1980 to 452,964 in 2017 (The Sentencing Project 2020). The irony is that the incarceration of drug offenders is a highly ineffective way to reduce the amount of illegal drugs sold in the United States. When street-level drug sellers are incarcerated, they are quickly replaced by other sellers, since what drives the drug market is demand for drugs. Incarcerating large numbers of drug offenders has not ameliorated the drug problem in the United States (King et al. 2005).

Despite the lack of evidence that increased incarceration rates lead to decreased crime (Lynch 1999), the United States continued to build prisons and imprison more people (Gilmore 2007). For decades, we failed to changed our policies in response to substantial evidence that being tough on crime does not lead to safer communities. Politicians who directed money to the criminal justice system could claim to their constituents that they were serious about law enforcement. This strategy, creating the impression that they had the crime victims' interests at heart, became essential for winning electoral campaigns (Simon 2007). In 1998, political activist and scholar Angela Davis pointed out: "Mass incarceration is not a solution to unemployment, nor is it a solution to the vast array of social problems that are hidden away in a rapidly growing network of prisons and jails. However, the great majority of people have been tricked into believing in the efficacy of imprisonment, even though the historical record clearly demonstrates that prisons do not work" (1998, 3). The emergence of mass incarceration as a solution to social ills can be attributed primarily to the War on Drugs, as we will see.

VOICES

How Can We Reconcile Prison Abolition with #MeToo?

The past 17 years have seen an increase in prison abolition groups and organizing. In stark contrast to prison reform advocates, who push to improve prison conditions but posit that prisons are ultimately necessary for societal safety, prison abolitionists charge that prisons themselves are sites of violence and can never be adequately reformed. Instead, prisons must be eliminated; so too must the conditions that send people to prison, including racism, poverty and root causes of violence.

Conspicuous by its absence in many of the conversations about prison abolition, however, is how to address gender-based violence and harm without relying on police and prisons.

At the same time, many of the most prominent organizations and movements fighting domestic and sexual violence continue to rely on policing and prisons. In the aftermath of the six-month prison sentence imposed upon Brock Turner, the White Stanford student convicted of sexually assaulting an unconscious woman, feminist groups and activists expressed outrage at the shortness of the sentence and called for the ouster of his sentencing judge.

Harsher punishments and lengthier sentences have always fallen hardest upon—and devastated—people and communities of color, while providing little safety or prevention from gender violence.

Similarly, as accusations against celebrities like Harvey Weinstein and Bill Cosby mounted, calls for justice centered arrest and prison. The most vocal calls for “justice” failed to recognize that harsher punishments and lengthier sentences have always fallen hardest upon—and devastated—people and communities of color, while providing little safety or prevention from gender violence.

This reliance on criminalization reinforces state violence, which is not only perpetrated against overwhelmingly black and brown and

poor men, but also upholds a system punishing women (cisgender and trans), trans men, gender non-conforming and intersex people, even when they themselves are victimized by violence. We've seen this in the case of Marissa Alexander, the Florida mother initially sentenced to 20 years in prison after firing a warning shot to stop her abusive husband's assault. We've seen this in the case of Ky Peterson, a black trans man currently serving a 20-year prison sentence after fatally shooting the man who raped him.

How did we get to this divide?

In 1994, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which pushed police to respond to complaints of domestic violence, sexual assault and other gender-based violence. The act was the result of years of lawsuits and organizing by many feminists to force law enforcement to respond to gender-based violence rather than dismissing it as an interpersonal issue. In many jurisdictions, VAWA resulted in mandatory arrest laws and more punitive prison sentences. It also led to policies such as *dual arrests*, in which police arrested both people. Some jurisdictions jail victims as material witnesses or impose fines and threaten a survivor with arrest if they do not cooperate with prosecution. (The city of Columbus, Georgia, changed its policy of non-cooperation fines and arrests after a lawsuit by abuse survivor Cleopatra Harrison and the Southern Center for Human Rights.)

By and large, carceral feminism views solutions to gender-based violence through a White middle-class lens.

Carceral feminism is the term often used to describe this reliance on increased policing, prosecution and imprisonment as the primary solution to gender-based violence. By and large, carceral feminism views solutions to gender-based violence through a White middle-class lens, one which ignores the ways in which intersecting identities, such as race, class, gender identity and immi gration status, leave certain women more vulnerable to violence, including state violence. … It's still also true that nearly 90 percent of incarcerated people are men (or classified as men). But not every

feminist and anti-violence activist espouses a carceral solution. For years, anti-violence activists and organizations, such as *Beth Richie* and INCITE!, have argued that increased criminalization replaces abuse by an individual with abuse by law enforcement, courts and prisons while doing nothing to address the root causes of violence against women. We've seen this with Marisa Alexander, Ky Peterson and countless other women and trans people. … I've interviewed numerous adult survivors of domestic violence imprisoned for defending themselves. Again and again, they tell me that they turned to the police and legal system, both of which failed to protect them. Perhaps the police took their abuser away for a few days, but that didn't stop the violence. Perhaps the courts issued an order of protection, a piece of paper that their abuser flagrantly ignored. Perhaps the police did nothing. Perhaps their abuser *was* the police. This same legal system that failed to protect them then punished them for their survival. In prison, many are subject to violence—at the hands of other incarcerated people, staff members or the day-to-day practices.

At the same time, much prison abolition organizing continues to reflect larger society's failure to consider the societal and cultural shifts needed to end gender-based violence or to develop concrete ways to prevent and address domestic and sexual violence in daily life. … Transformative Justice

One way to address interpersonal violence without relying on state violence is through transformative justice. Transformative justice refers to a community process that addresses not only the needs of the person who was harmed, but also the conditions that enabled this harm. In other words, instead of looking at the act(s) of violence in a vacuum, transformative justice processes ask, "What else needs to change so that this never happens again? What needs to happen so that the survivor can heal?" There's no right or wrong set of footprints to follow in transformative justice; instead, each process depends on the people and circumstances. … Processes of community accountability are messy and rarely follow

a uniform path. They often, however, mix and match from a distinct set of alternative tools that include actions for both organizations and individuals. Counseling for the person who caused harm, removal from leadership positions, admission of guilt, public and/or private apologies, workshops and trainings, and specific behavioral changes are just some of the demands that communities can make. Regardless of what forms they take, continuing to explore alternatives to state violence in response to gender-based violence is an essential piece of the movements to end both.

Source: Law 2018.

Mass Incarceration and the War on Drugs

To understand why Black men are imprisoned at seven times the rate of White men and why the United States imprisons more people than any other country in the world requires a consideration of the War on Drugs, which is largely responsible for the explosion in incarceration rates since 1980. Whereas only 41,000 people were behind bars for a drug offense in 1980, the figure had risen astronomically to about half a million in 2010 (Alexander 2010). Many people are incarcerated for low-level drug crimes. Between 1993 and 2011, thirty million people were arrested for drug crimes. About 85 percent of these arrests were for drug possession, and only 15 percent were for drug sales (Sawyer and Wagner 2020; Figures 11-6 and 11-7).

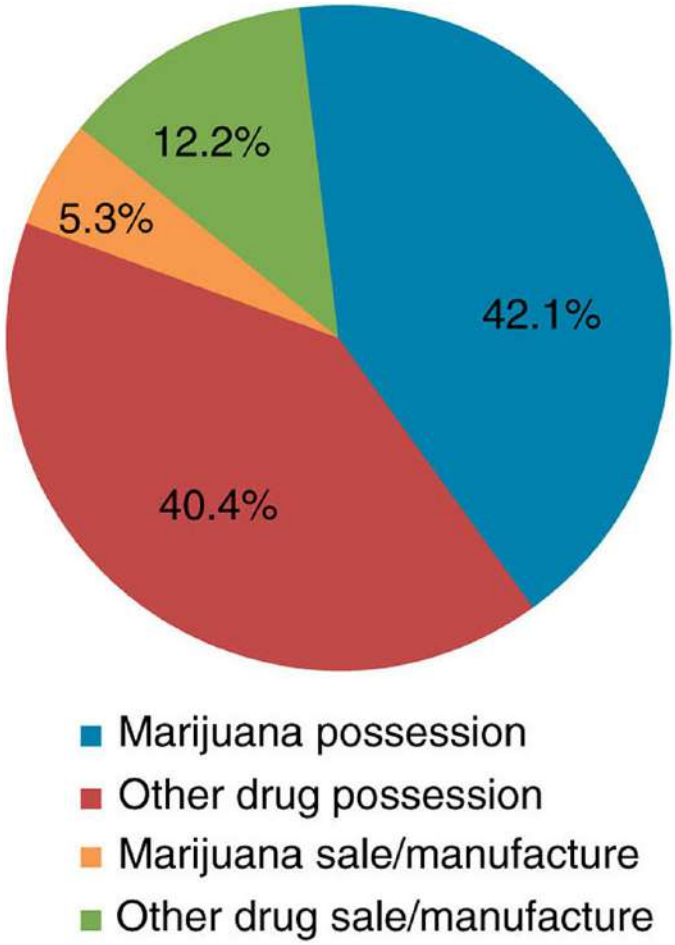


FIGURE 11-6 Reasons for Drug Arrests. Source: Rothwell (2016).

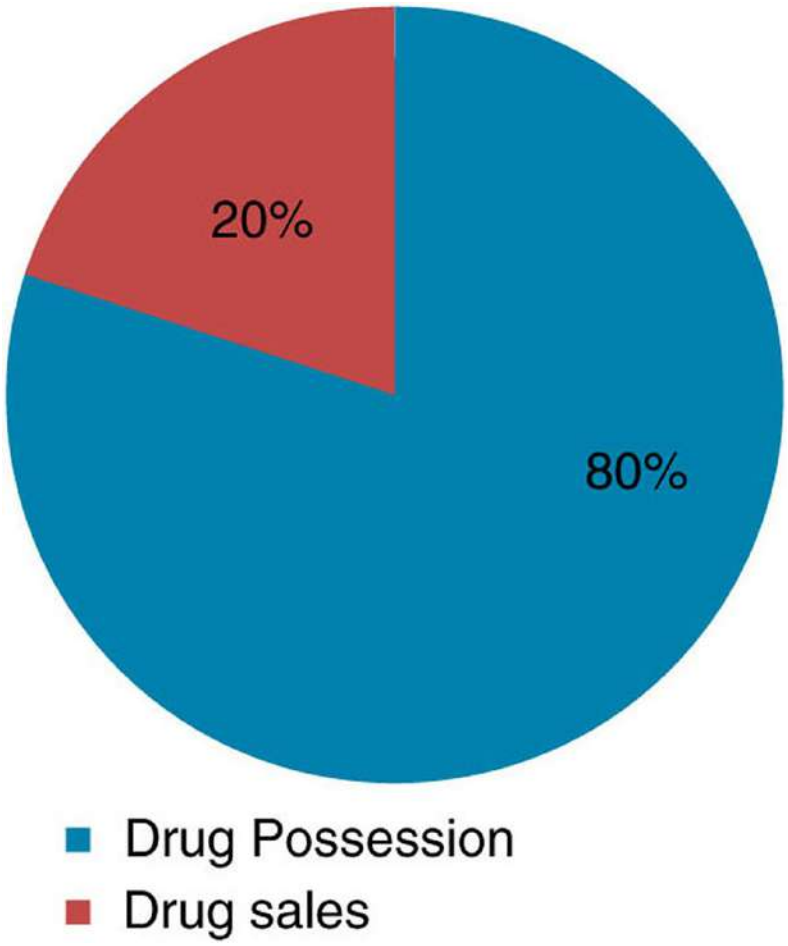


FIGURE 11-7 Drug Sales Versus Drug Possession Arrests, 2018 Source: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html#:~:text=This%20report%20provides%20a%20detailed,even%20the%20most%20minor%20offenses

Zealous enforcement of drug laws disproportionately affects people of color, even though White people are more likely to use and sell drugs. In the United States, Black men are sent to prison on drug charges at thirteen times the rate of White men, yet five times as many White people as Black people use illegal drugs (Alexander 2010). According to results from the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, White youth aged twelve to seventeen are more likely than Black youth to have sold illegal drugs (Alexander 2010). These data are based on self-reports, yet they are confirmed by more objective data: White youth are about three times as likely as their African American counterparts to end up in an emergency room for drug-related emergencies. White people who use and abuse

drugs most often buy their drugs from White sellers, just as Black people who use drugs tend to buy from Black sellers (Alexander 2010).

Law enforcement agents cannot fully enforce drug laws because drug use and selling are too widespread. More than half of the people in the United States have violated drug laws at some point in their lives, yet relatively few have been punished for it. In any given year, about 10 percent of American adults violate drug laws. As law enforcement agents have neither the resources nor the mandate to prosecute every lawbreaker, they must be strategic with their resources and enforcement tactics. Because of stereotypes that drug law violators are Black, combined with the relatively weak political power of poor Black communities, law enforcement agents have targeted open-air drug markets in poor Black communities instead of the places where White people use and sell drugs (Alexander 2010).

Crack cocaine is often portrayed as public enemy number one in the War on Drugs. It is thus remarkable that crack cocaine hit the streets in 1985—three years before the War on Drugs began, in 1982. When President Ronald Reagan officially declared the War on Drugs, less than 2 percent of Americans viewed drugs as the most important problem facing the nation. Public opinion changed drastically after the War on Drugs was launched in 1982, and crack cocaine became an urban problem in 1985. A media frenzy broke out over the problems related to people described as crackheads, crack babies, and crackwhores. The media often racialized the crack problem as a Black problem by showing images of Black people in connection with stories about crack cocaine (Alexander 2010).

The penalties that emerged for possession and sale of crack cocaine were the harshest drug penalties in U.S. history. When the Anti-Drug Abuse Act was passed in 1988, it meted out a five-year mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack. This was unprecedented: prior to this legislation, one year of imprisonment was the maximum sentence one could receive for possession of any amount of any drug (Alexander 2010). Along with the federal laws, states began to pass stricter laws,

including “three strikes,” “truth in sentencing,” and “zero tolerance” legislation, which led to a huge upswing in incarceration rates. By 1996, nearly three-quarters of all people admitted to state prisons were nonviolent offenders with relatively minor convictions (Ladipo 2001).

At the federal level, three major laws were passed in 1984, 1986, and 1988 that marked the beginning of a new era in criminal justice:

- The **1984 Crime Control Act** established mandatory minimum sentences and eliminated federal parole.
- The **Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986** imposed even more mandatory minimum sentences. Most significantly, it set a five-year mandatory minimum sentence for offenses involving 100 grams of heroin, 500 grams of cocaine, or 5 grams of crack cocaine.
- The **Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988** included a five-year mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack cocaine, with no evidence of intent to sell. Prior to 1988, one year of imprisonment had been the maximum penalty for possession of any amount of any drug.

Race, Class, Gender, and Mass Incarceration

Mass incarceration has led to the filling of jails with Black and Latino working-class and poor men. Mass incarceration is thus evidently raced, classed, and gendered. However, an intersectional analysis requires consideration not only of the numbers of Black and Latino men behind bars, but also of how mass incarceration affects people in distinct social locations differently. When we look at women, for example, it becomes clear that there are three specific ways that mass incarceration has directly affected women in distinct ways from men:

1. Very few women were behind bars prior to 1970, so incarceration is

a relatively new phenomenon for women. Incarceration rates for women rose dramatically in the context of the War on Drugs. Between 1970 and 1997, the population of women in prison rose more than twelve-fold, from 5,600 to 75,000. With the addition of 35,000 more women in jails, there were about 100,000 women incarcerated by the late 1990s (Covington and Bloom 2003). By 2017, 105,033 women were behind bars (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2020). Similar to men, women of color are incarcerated at a higher rate than White women. In 2018, Black women were twice as likely as White women to be incarcerated, and Latinx women were 34 percent more likely (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2020).

2. Women are more likely than men to have been the primary caregivers prior to being incarcerated. This means that the incarceration of women often has a more direct and immediate effect on their children.
3. Women are more likely than men to have experienced physical or sexual abuse. One study found that nearly 80 percent of women prisoners had experienced some form of abuse in their lives. Many of the women serving time for violent crimes are in jail for retaliating against their abuser (Covington and Bloom 2003).

VOICES

The #SayHerName Social Movement

by Maria Duenas

#SayHerName is a global social movement that calls for increased attention to Black women's experiences with police brutality. The #SayHerName movement critiques the Black Lives Matter movement, media, elected officials, and others for the relative lack of attention given to Black women killed by police compared to the attention given to the murders of Black men by law enforcement. It underscores the need for an intersectional perspective to criminalization that examines gendered and racialized mechanisms of policing of all Black bodies. It further takes on an intersectional approach by examining how multiple systems of oppression shape the state-sanctioned violence that Black women experience, include ability, sexuality, gender identity, age, class, and more.

The hashtag campaign, initially coined by the African American Policy Forum, strives to bring awareness to the police violence Black women face and highlights how police brutality is part of the systemic violence that Black women experience throughout the world. It calls for anti-racist actions against police brutality that recognizes the collective institutional oppressions that Black women face. It also builds a global Black women–centered network and community of support for family members who have lost loved ones.

To honor one of the countless lives lost of Black women, which go underreported in mainstream media outlets, we say her name: Breonna Taylor. Breonna Taylor was murdered in her own home on March 13, 2020 in Louisville, Kentucky by police. Officers entered the home just after midnight with a no-knock warrant. Kenneth Walker, Breonna's boyfriend, who suspected a break-in, shot at an officer who then fired back using at least twenty bullets. Ms. Taylor was shot eight times. She was a 26-year-old emergency medical

technician who would have celebrated her 27th birthday on June 5th, 2020. The #SayHerName movement strives for the lives of Black women like Breonna to never be forgotten and for justice for all survivors of police violence.

Sources: The African American Policy Forum 2020; Los Angeles Times 2020.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 11.1: Mass Incarceration in the United States

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Institutional Racism in the Criminal Justice System

Racial disparities in incarceration rates are a classic example of institutional racism. As discussed in Chapter Four, institutional racism is the creation of racial disparities as a result of institutional practices and policies that distribute resources, power, and advantages to White people. Racial inequalities in law enforcement are institutionalized at every level of the criminal justice process, from stops to arrests to charges to sentencing to release. Black and Latinx people are more likely to be arrested than White people. They are more likely to be charged, more likely to be convicted, more likely to be given a longer sentence, and more likely to face the death penalty. The cumulative effect of these disparities at each stage of the process creates a situation in which Black men are seven times more likely than White men to be put behind bars.

Racial Profiling

Racial profiling is the use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspicion. In the United States, Black and Latinx people are more likely than White people to be stopped by police (Baumgartner et al. 2017).

In the early 1990s, statistician John Lamberth (1994) conducted a detailed study that provided convincing evidence of racial profiling. Lamberth's study revealed that only 13 percent of all cars on the New Jersey Turnpike had a Black driver or passenger but that 35 percent of those stopped on the turnpike were Black, and 73.2 percent of those arrested were Black. Black people were much more likely than White people to be stopped, even though Black drivers and White drivers

violated traffic laws at almost the same rate. Studies in other states have revealed similar results: police officers are more likely to pull over African American drivers than White drivers. In Maryland, an American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) study found that 75 percent of drivers along Interstate 95 were White, but between January 1995 and September 1996, 73 percent of the motorists that Maryland state police searched were Black (Harris 1999). Racial profiling also extends to Hispanic people: a study in Volusia County in Florida, for example, revealed that Black and Hispanic people were more likely to be pulled over and much more likely to be searched once pulled over than White people (Mauer 1999).

In response to these findings that police officers engage in racial profiling, state legislatures began to mandate that police departments collect more data. Frank R. Baumgartner, Leah Christiani, Derek A. Epp, Kevin Roach, and Kelsey Shoub (2017) were thus able to analyze publicly available information about racial profiling from hundreds of police agencies across thirteen states. Baumgartner and his colleagues focused their analysis on police searches following a traffic stop. They wanted to know the likelihood that a motorist would be searched by the police after being pulled over and how that likelihood varies depending on the race of the driver. After analyzing 55 million stops and 1.9 million searches, they found that police officers search an average of 3.2 percent of White drivers that they stop, compared with 7.6 percent of Black drivers and 8.7 percent of Hispanic or Latinx drivers. The Evanston (Illinois) Police Department had the greatest disparity in its stops of Black and White drivers: it was seven times more likely to search a Black driver than a White driver. The Cook County (Chicago metropolitan area) Sheriff's Department had the single largest racial disparity: its police officers were eighteen times more likely to search a Hispanic or Latinx driver than a White driver. Of the 132 agencies surveyed, only 9 of them were less likely to search Black drivers than White drivers.

Racial profiling happens on street corners as well as highways, where police officers stop and frisk Black and Latinx people much more frequently than they do White people. African Americans make up 13

percent of the U.S. population and 14 percent of illegal drug users in this country. However, they account for 37 percent of the people arrested for drug offenses, in part because they are more likely to be stopped and frisked than White people (Mauer 2009). In New York City, for example, one study found that Black people account for half of all people stopped by the police, even though they are only a quarter of the New York City population (Gelman, Fagan, and Kiss 2007). Once stopped, New York police officers are more likely to frisk Black and Latinx people than White people. According to data provided by the New York Police Department (NYPD), between 1998 and 2008, NYPD officers frisked 85 percent of Black and Latinx people they stopped, compared with only 8 percent of White people (New York City Bar 2013). A study in Seattle revealed similar results. Seventy percent of people in Seattle are White, and the majority of those who sell and use drugs in Seattle are White. However, Black people represent nearly two-thirds of all those arrested for drug offenses (Barnes and Chang 2012). This is primarily because police officers tend to target predominantly Black neighborhoods in criminal law enforcement operations.

Racial profiling leads to disparate treatment of White, Black, and Latinx people by police agencies.

Black Lives Matter

Racial profiling leads to disparate treatment of White, Black, and Latinx people by police agencies. It also can have deadly consequences, as in the case of George Floyd, which sparked nationwide protests in 2020. Floyd was killed during an arrest over an allegedly counterfeit $20 bill, when police officer Derek Chauvin kneeled on his neck for over 8 minutes. On April 20, 2021, a jury found Chauvin guilty of second-degree murder and related charges - a rare outcome for a police officer on trial for killing a person while on duty.

The Black Lives Matter movement arose in 2013 as part of a broad campaign against racial violence. The associated hashtag—created by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi—channeled reactions on social media following the outcome of *Florida v. George Zimmerman*. Zimmerman, a self-appointed neighborhood watchman, fatally shot unarmed teenager Trayvon Martin in 2012 yet was acquitted of all charges. In 2014–2015, Black Lives Matter gained momentum in response to a series of police-related deaths, including those of Eric Garner in New York City; Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; Walter Scott in North Charleston, South Carolina; Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Maryland; and Sandra Bland in Waller County, Texas. Sandra Bland, whose story is told in the Voices sidebar in this section, was pulled over after she failed to use her turn signal. Although it is difficult to establish discriminatory treatment in some situations, Black and Latinx people are more likely than White people to be stopped by police (Baumgartner et al. 2017).

VOICES

Sandy Bland

Sandra Annette Bland—who went by Sandy—was born in 1987, in Chicago. After completing high school, she received a music scholarship at Prairie View A&M University, a historically Black university in Waller County, Texas. She graduated in 2009 with a degree in animal science.

A protestor holds a sign in remembrance of Sandra Bland.

Sandy secured a low- paying job in nearby Houston after graduating. Driving around Houston, she racked up a series of traffic tickets. When she was unable to pay them, a warrant was issued for her arrest. She later was arrested for marijuana possession and was sentenced to 30 days in jail. She did that time in addition to several days for the traffic tickets.

After that experience, Sandy moved back to Illinois, where she worked in several low-paying jobs. While in Illinois, she battled

depression, yet managed to hold on to work most of the time.

In July 2015, Sandy applied for a job at Prairie View A&M University. When she was called for an interview, she left her job in Chicago and drove down to Texas. On July 10, she signed the papers for her new job. On her way home, Texas state trooper Brian Encinia pulled her over.

Encinia claims that he pulled Sandy over because she had failed to use her turn signal. Sandy claims she was trying to move out of the way so that he could pass.

As Encinia was writing her ticket, he asked her to put out her cigarette. Sandy, annoyed that she was getting a ticket for such a minor traffic offense, insisted that she did not have to put out her cigarette as she was in her own car.

At that point, Encinia asked her to get out of her car. She refused, saying that he did not have the right. Encinia opened her car door and told her that if she did not step out, he would remove her. He then began to use force against her while Sandy insisted that he did not have the right to remove her from her car. Encinia then stated she was under arrest. When she asked what for, he did not respond but pulled a gun and yelled that she had to get out of the car. At that point, she stepped out.

Sandy was arrested and taken to the jail. As she did not have funds for bail, she remained there. Three days later, she was found dead in her cell, and her death was labeled a suicide.

Encinia was indicted for perjury because a grand jury decided he had lied when he said he forced Sandy to get out of the car to conduct a safe traffic investigation. He was fired by the Texas Department of Public Safety after the indictment.

The family of Sandra Bland settled a wrongful death lawsuit against officials in Waller County for $1.9 million.

Sources: Chammah 2016; *Chicago Tribune* 2016; Nathan 2016.

Sentencing Disparities

Black and Latinx people are more likely to be arrested than White people. An arrest is just the point of entry into the criminal justice system, where Black and Latinx people are likely to continue facing stacked odds. A study of federal offenders, for example, found that Black and Latinx people are more likely to be sentenced to longer prison terms than White people, even after taking into account the severity of the charges. In contrast, White people are more likely than Black people to get no prison time when that option is available. This study also found that the disparities between sentences for White and non-White people is most evident in drug-trafficking cases (Mustard 2001).

Although more White people are convicted of drug felonies than Black people, more Black people are admitted to prison. This disparity is related to the differing severity of sentences that Black people and White people receive in courts of law. Overall, Black people are sent to prison on drug charges at nearly twelve times the rate of White people, despite using and selling drugs at about the same rates (Alexander 2010). Police officers often target open-air drug markets in Black neighborhoods while ignoring the widespread use of narcotics in primarily White suburban areas and on college campuses. Because White people are less likely to be arrested for drug offenses, they are less likely to be charged, convicted, or sentenced to prison for drug offenses. This means that harsh penalties for drug offenses have had a disproportionate impact on people of color.

As the War on Drugs advanced in the 1980s, discretionary power was increasingly taken away from judges out of fear they might be soft on crime. One of the trends in sentencing reform has been the introduction of mandatory minimum sentences and mandatory guidelines for calculating prison sentences (Simon 2007). The implementation of mandatory prison terms for certain drug crimes has had a disproportionate impact on African Americans. The 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act established mandatory prison terms of five years for possession

or sale of 5 grams of crack cocaine or 500 grams of powder cocaine. This sentencing disparity is emblematic of how drug law enforcement has meted out different sentences to Black people and White people.

Between 1986 and 2006, more than 80 percent of people sentenced to prison for crack cocaine were Black (Mauer 2007). This statistic is especially remarkable when we consider that two-thirds of regular crack cocaine users were either White or Latinx (Mauer 2009). The 1986 act is one of many pieces of legislation that set mandatory minimum sentences, which have disproportionately affected African Americans. Black people are 21 percent more likely than White people to receive a mandatory minimum sentence when facing an eligible charge, and Black drug defendants are 20 percent more likely than White drug defendants to be sentenced to prison (Mauer 2009).

The Ultimate Sentence: Racial Disparities in the Death Penalty

As a Black man accused of killing a White man, Troy Davis had the odds against him. A study conducted in California found that people accused of killing White people are over three times more likely to be sentenced to death than those who kill African Americans (American Civil Liberties Union 2003). Another study examined all death penalty cases since 1977, when the death penalty was reinstated, and found that although White people accounted for about half of all murder victims, 80 percent of all death penalty cases involved White victims (American Civil Liberties Union 2003). In addition, between 1976 and 2002, only twelve people were executed for crimes in which the defendant was White and the victim Black, compared with the 178 Black defendants who were executed after having been convicted of killing a White person (American Civil Liberties Union 2003). Between 1976 and 2017, over 75 percent of murder victims in death penalty cases were White, even though only about half of all murder victims are White. In that same period, more

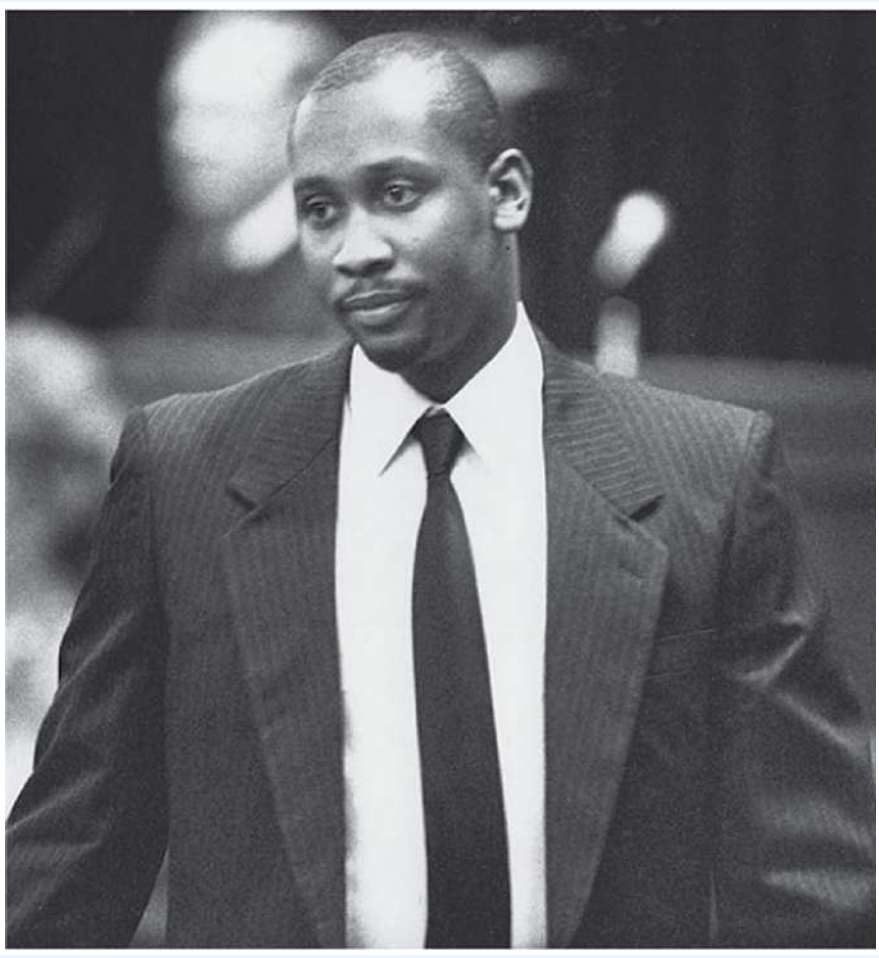
than 1,400 people were executed in the United States, and 34 percent of them were African American. Remarkably, more than 155 people were released from death row in that period after being found innocent (Death Penalty Information Center, 2017).

In recent years, the death penalty has come under increasing scrutiny. New Mexico and New Jersey have abolished the death penalty, and death sentences have decreased since their peak in the 1990s. In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court has abolished the death penalty for minors and mentally retarded people (Amnesty International 2010).

VOICES

Troy Davis

On September 21, 2011, the state of Georgia executed Troy Davis, an African American man who was raised in Savannah, Georgia, where he was a coach for the Savannah Police Athletic League. His father was a former police officer.



Troy Davis.

In 1991, Troy Davis was convicted of the murder of Mark MacPhail, a White off-duty police officer. There is no physical evidence connecting Davis to the crime scene. A murder weapon has never been found. The conviction is based primarily on eyewitness

accounts, even though seven of the nine witnesses who were not police officers have recanted their testimonies since Davis's original conviction. Amnesty International, the NAACP, and several other groups demanded clemency. Several prominent leaders, including Jimmy Carter, Desmond Tutu, and Pope Benedict XVI, called for a closer examination of the evidence.

Supporters of Troy Davis protested outside of the execution grounds right up until the moment of his execution. Many of them claimed there was too much doubt about his guilt for the state to proceed. One of the original jurors, Brenda Forrest, declared on CNN: "If I knew then what I know now, Troy Davis would not be on death row. The verdict would be 'not guilty.'" Troy Davis's sister claims that the witnesses were coerced and threatened with jail time. Another witness, Benjamin Gordon, alleged that he had been coerced by police to implicate Davis. In addition, Gordon signed a statement in 2008 that claimed he actually had seen another person shoot the officer. Because of these and other testimonies, Davis's supporters contended there was too much doubt for Davis to be executed. The State of Georgia disagreed.

Source: Thomson 2011.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 11.2: Institutional Racism in the Criminal Justice System

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The Economics of Mass Incarceration

Mass incarceration is a consequence of laws passed at both the state and the federal levels. Before the election of Ronald Reagan as president, however, keeping street crime in check had traditionally been the responsibility of state and local law enforcement. To fulfill Reagan's campaign promise to fight crime, his administration poured money into federal law enforcement agencies, and Congress passed federal laws that enhanced the punishments for drug-related offenses.

California led the states in prison buildup. Between 1977 and 2007, the California State Assembly passed more than 1,000 laws extending and toughening prison sentences (Wacquant 2009). The California state prison population increased five-fold between 1982 and 2000, even though the crime rate peaked in 1980 and declined thereafter (Gilmore 2007). Notably, California's incarceration rate increased *after* the crime rate had begun to decrease. California had built only twelve prisons between 1852 and 1964, yet built twenty-three major new prisons between 1984 and 2004 (Gilmore 2007). What happened? Why did California engage in this massive prison-building project? Why did the legislature pass so many anticrime laws?

The answers to these questions can be found through a consideration of the economic restructuring that California underwent leading up to this period. During World War II, much of California's prosperity had been tied directly to defense contracts: people from across the country flocked to California to secure well-paying jobs building defense machinery. After the war, California invested in education and technology to ensure that defense contracts would continue, and it endeavored to make itself uniquely able to provide research, development, and manufacturing for

the Department of Defense (DoD). DoD contracts continued to come in until the 1980s, but they contributed to splitting the labor market into high-skilled, well-paid technology jobs on one hand and low-skilled, poorly paid jobs on the other (Gilmore 2007).

The restructuring of California's economy led to increases in unemployment, poverty, and inequality. By the 1980s, California was a highly unequal state, with high poverty rates, high housing costs, and high unemployment rates while also being home to some of the wealthiest people in the nation. Over the next fifteen years, its economy continued to change, with increasing numbers of low-paid manufacturing and service jobs and fewer high-paid manufacturing jobs. Childhood poverty rates had increased 25 percent between 1969 and 1979, and they continued to soar over the next decade, increasing another 67 percent between 1980 and 1995, so that by the end of the twentieth century, one in four children in California lived in poverty (Gilmore 2007). Beset with social problems, the California legislature attempted to use mass incarceration as a solution to poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Prisons serve the double purpose of providing employment to tens of thousands of Californians and locking away a good proportion of the surplus labor force.

Chapter 11.2 Video

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The economic restructuring in California mirrored that of the rest of the country, as did cuts in government spending. When Ronald Reagan took office in 1980, he implemented **Reaganomics**, a set of economic policies that involved heavy cuts to a wide variety of social programs across the country. Christian Parenti (1999, 40–41) explains: "In 1982 alone, Reagan cut the real value of welfare by 24 percent, slashed the budget for child nutrition by 34 percent, reduced funding for school milk programs by 78

percent, urban development action grants by 35 percent, and educational block grants by 38 percent." These enormous cuts in social spending disproportionately affected low-wage people of color in urban areas.

At the same time that states were cutting spending on education and social services, all but two states (Massachusetts and New Hampshire) increased spending on incarceration. Nationwide, spending on state and local corrections outpaced spending on PK–12 education three-fold from 1979–1980 to 2012–2013 (Figure 11-8). Public school expenditures increased by 107 percent (from $258 to $534 billion), while total state and local corrections expenditures increased by 324 percent (from $17 to $71 billion). The magnitude of this increase varied considerably from state to state. In New Mexico and Wyoming, incarceration spending outpaced education spending eight-fold (Stullich, Morgan, and Schak 2016).

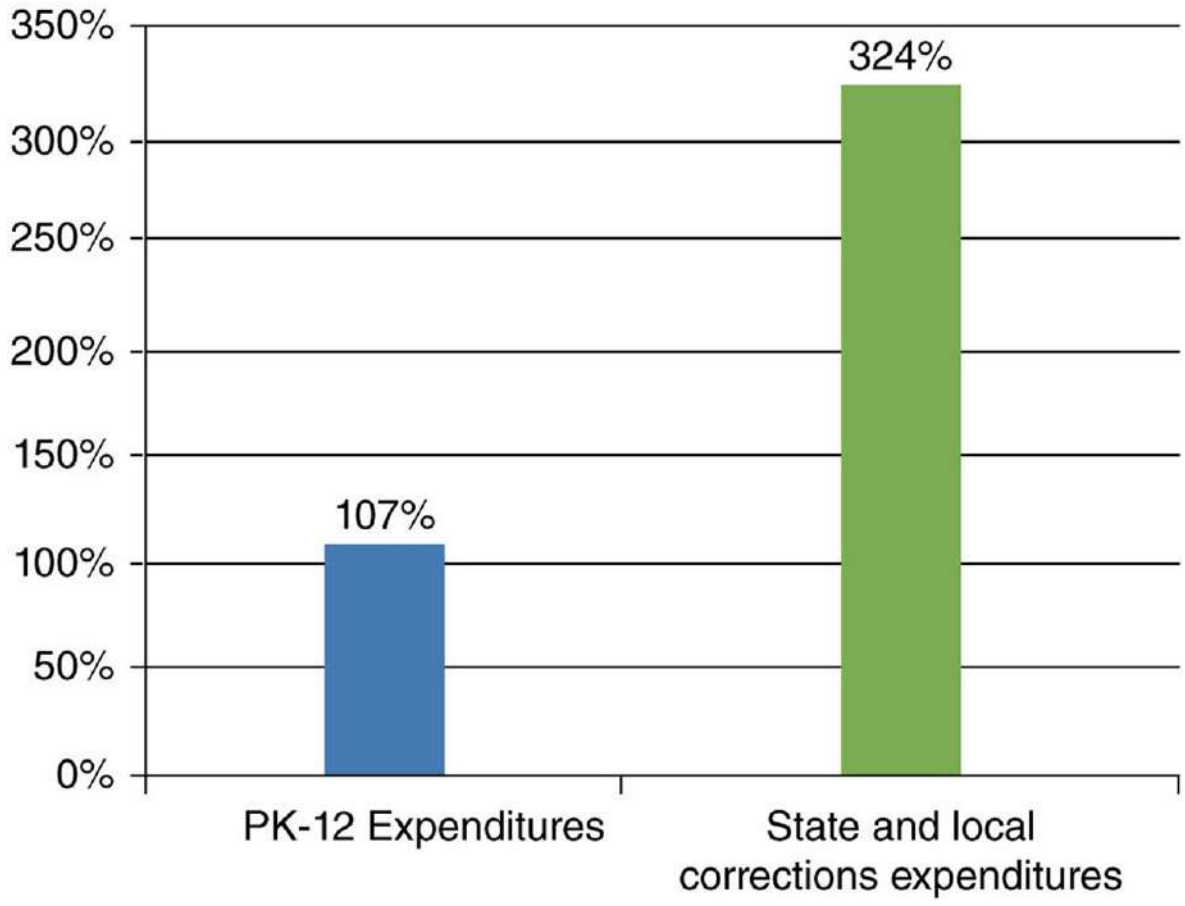

FIGURE 11-8 Percentage Change in Education Expenditures (PK–12) and State and Local Corrections Expenditures from 1979–1980 to 2012–2013 Source: Stullich, Morgan, and Schak (2016).

Neoliberalism is a label for the ideology that open markets, liberalized trade, and privatization are the keys to economic success. Neoliberalism is based on the idea that the government's primary role is to protect property rights, free markets, and free trade, not to hand out social services to its citizens. Under this ideology, the government does not provide any social assistance, and the needs of the poor are left to the market. Although neoliberalism demands that the government cut back its social services, there is one area that tends to grow when these policies are implemented: its coercive arm (i.e., the police force and the military). Insofar as neoliberalism diminishes opportunities and services for the poor, the government must ensure that working-class and poor people do not pose a threat to the rich. Government cutbacks in social services often lead to dissent and increases in crime. The government responds by strengthening the police force and the military. Under neoliberalism, "in the United States, incarceration became a key state strategy to deal with problems arising among discarded workers and marginalized populations. The coercive arm of the state is augmented to protect corporate interests and, if necessary, to repress dissent" (Harvey 2005, 77).

At the same time as the government began to cut social spending, companies began to **outsource** manufacturing, moving jobs once held by Americans overseas, where cheaper labor could be found. This practice, part of the larger process of **deindustrialization**, led to the impoverishment of cities such as Chicago and Detroit. Detroit was hit particularly hard: it lost half of its population in the 1980s. In Detroit as well as other cities across the country, the War on Drugs kicked off at the same time that inner-city communities were experiencing a dramatic economic crisis. As discussed in Chapter Ten, well-paying, stable blue-collar jobs disappeared, leaving unemployment, as well as social unrest, in their wake (Alexander 2010). This social unrest in turn led to the

expansion of the criminal justice system, which was designed to manage and contain the underclass created by neoliberal economic policies.

When we tie economics into an analysis of the criminal justice system, however, it also becomes clear that the Great Recession (2007–2008) finally gave elected leaders the political will to make cuts to the prison system. In 2009, after thirty years of prison building, California found itself with a massive prison system it was no longer able to finance, and it began to release some prisoners to cut costs. Nationwide, the number of prisoners decreased for the first time in thirty-seven years (Aviram 2015). By 2011, one-fourth of states had closed or planned to close a prison (Clear and Frost 2015). In 2010, then-president Barack Obama signed the Fair Sentencing Act, which repealed the five-year mandatory sentence for first-time offenders and for repeat offenders with less than 28 grams of cocaine. The change also involved reducing the 100-to-1 sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine convictions to 18-to-1, in response to decades of activism (Murakawa 2014). And in 2016, Obama announced that the federal government would be ending its contracts with private prisons that held federal prisoners. When Donald Trump took office in 2017, however, he decided not to honor that agreement.

Private Prisons

Private prisons in the United States date back to 1984, when the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) was awarded its first government contract in 1984. During the 1990s, the CCA began to see substantial profits, and by 1998 its stock prices had hit $44 a share. The CCA was doing so well that at the end of the twentieth century, the company began to build speculative prisons—"excess prison space for inmates who did not yet exist" (Wood 2007, 232)—with the expectation that the prison population would continue to grow.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, rates of incarceration leveled off, and the CCA faced serious problems. Its stock

values fell from $44 in 1998 to a mere $0.18 in December 2000. By 2001, the CCA had 8,500 empty beds and was over a billion dollars in debt (Wood 2007). Its rival, Wackenhut, also saw its stock lose a third of its value between 1998 and 2001 (Berestein 2008). Both companies had reinvested their immense profits in new prisons that were now sitting empty, and funding options seemed bleak.

Because states had cut back funding for prisons, the CCA looked to the federal government. Its federal lobbying expenses increased from $410,000 in 2000 to $3 million in 2004, and these efforts appear to have paid off. Not only has the CCA been awarded lucrative federal contracts in recent years to build new prisons, but the government has increased its rate of immigrant detention, leaving no doubt that newly built prisons can be kept full (Golash-Boza 2012). There was a slight decline in CCA stock prices when Obama announced that the Department of Justice would not be using private prisons, but their stock rebounded a few months later when Donald Trump—who had campaigned on a promise of mass deportation campaign—was elected. The day after Trump's victory was announced, shares of the two largest private prison companies—Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and GEO Group—increased 43 and 21 percent, respectively (Takai and Egan 2017).

The CCA has been able to obtain favorable government contracts in part because of its ties to current and former elected officials. The former head of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, J. Michael Quinlan, is one of the CCA's top executives. Both the CCA and its competitor Wackenhut have dominated the private prison sector because of their political influence. As Phillip Wood notes, "both benefit from extensive and intimate connections with state and local politics and the public corrections sector as well as from the usual interlocking directorships with other corporations in prison services, construction, the media and finance" (2007, 231). The enormous public and private investment in the criminal justice system has led some scholars to argue that we now have a prison-industrial complex.

The Prison-Industrial Complex

The **prison-industrial complex** (PIC) refers to the vast network of prisons, jails, courts, police officers, and other elements that purport to reduce the amount of criminal activity in our society. The PIC is a "self-perpetuating machine": the enormous investment in prisons, jails, and law enforcement, combined with the perceived political benefits of crime control, have led to policies such as mandatory minimum sentences that ensure that more people are sentenced to prison, thereby creating the need for more prison beds (Brewer and Heitzeg 2008, 637). A core feature of the idea of the PIC is that prisons are not built solely to house criminals; instead, a confluence of interests has led to building more prisons, enacting harsher laws, and mass incarcerating poor people. The constituencies with interests in mass incarceration include the media, private contractors, politicians, state bureaucracies, and private prisons (Davis 1998; Schlosser 1998; Do Valle, Huang, and Spira 2006; Gilmore 2007).

Ideas of racial otherness play an important role in the demonization of criminals. This otherization allows politicians to play on public fears and portray these groups as threatening public safety. As Michael Welch argues, the punitive drug control legislation passed in the last decades of the twentieth century to control crime and immigration is "not only poorly formulated, but also unjust and discriminatory against the poor and people of color" (2002, 14). Welch further contends that these laws are passed in the context of a "moral panic, a turbulent and exaggerated response to a putative social problem" (8).

The PIC relies on the production of criminals through repressive laws and the policing of communities to fill the prisons it builds (Richie 2005). The creation of increasingly strict crime laws is partly due to campaign tactics used by politicians who aim to play on fears regarding crime to capture more votes. One of the most famous examples of a politician using the fear of crime as a campaign tactic is the "Willie Horton" case. In the 1988

presidential race, George Bush's campaign played on White Americans' fear of crime and racial prejudices against Black people through use of an ad that featured "Willie Horton." Horton, a young Black man, escaped from prison while on a weekend pass. He then "kidnapped and brutally assaulted a White couple in their home, raping the woman and stabbing the man" (Mendelberg 1997). An ad that featured this story and a mugshot of Horton was used by the Bush campaign to portray the opposing party as being lax on crime. This ad was part of Bush's successful campaign to keep the presidency in Republican hands. It is just one of many examples of politicians using fears about crime for political gain. Notably, the Willie Horton case used both the fear of crime and the fear of Black men to push forward a political agenda.

The PIC has come into being because it serves the interests of powerful groups in our society. Politicians have used a tough-on-crime approach to gain votes. The mass media have highlighted local crime to attract viewers (Chermak 1994). Rural areas have turned to building prisons to boost local economic development—over two-thirds of the prisons built in California between 1982 and 1998 were built on formerly irrigated agricultural land that had ceased production (Gilmore 2007, 105–106). Finally, private prisons have cashed in on growing rates of incarceration (Schlosser 1998; Do Valle et al. 2006; Brewer and Heitzeg 2008). For these reasons, not because of excessive rates of criminality, we now have over two million people behind bars in the United States, over ten times as many as we did prior to the 1970s. Mass incarceration of poor people has generated profits for private prisons and political capital for politicians, yet it has not made this country any safer (Hattery and Smith 2006).

SELF-ASSESSMENT 11.3: The Economics of Mass Incarceration

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Beyond Incarceration: Collateral Consequences

Incarceration affects most directly the two million people behind bars. It also has a great impact on the seven million people under criminal justice supervision. Because of the lifelong stigma associated with a felony, mass incarceration also affects the twelve million felons in the United States long after they have been released from prison. Incarceration not only influences the lives of these nineteen million people who have been directly involved in the criminal justice system: it also has wide-ranging collateral consequences for their children, spouses, and communities.

The Impact of Mass Incarceration on Families and Children

Over half of all inmates—more than 120,000 mothers and 1.1 million fathers behind bars—have minor children (Sofer 2017). Often, when a family member is incarcerated, legally innocent people have to change their behavior, expectations, and living arrangements in response to the loss of a family member or friend. They also may suffer emotional or health-related consequences (Comfort 2007). Children are the most obvious victims of adult incarceration. More than 5 million American children, a staggering 7 percent (1 in 14), have had a parent incarcerated at some point in their lives (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2016). Nearly one-third of the residents of the United States—113 million people—have an immediate family member who has spent time in prison or jail (Sawyer and Wagner 2020).

Parental imprisonment deepens racial inequality insofar as Black and Latinx families are disproportionately its victims (Wildeman 2009). Poor Black and Latinx children face trauma and disadvantage because of parental incarceration more often than do White children (Wildeman 2009). The incarceration of a parent—usually a father—often has financial consequences for a household. This is particularly the case when the father was working, as men often are the primary or only breadwinner in a family unit. Families with an incarcerated member often have to change residence because of the loss of an income. Relocating affects family members' access to neighborhood support networks, and children may be forced to change schools (Geller, Garfinkel, Cooper, and Mincy 2009).

Over half of all inmates have minor children, who suffer the collateral consequences of mass incarceration.

Some mothers choose to maintain a relationship with the incarcerated fathers of their children. However, doing so requires resources and often

puts a financial strain on families, especially if they are poor (Woldoff and Washington 2008). The loss of a parent has economic costs, but there may be other costs as well. When one parent is incarcerated, the other parent may have less time and money to invest in his or her children. In addition, older siblings may find themselves with new responsibilities, ranging from care of younger siblings to housework to the need to seek outside employment (Foster and Hagan 2009). The stigma associated with the incarceration of parents may also be a source of shame for children (Foster and Hagan 2009).

A study of nearly 2,000 women in Mexico found that Mexican women with an incarcerated family member had significantly higher levels of stress than women without an incarcerated family member (Connors et al. 2020). Studies conducted in the United States have found that the imprisonment of a family member negatively affects family communication, mental health, physical health, finances, and educational outcomes (DeHart and Clone 2018; Shaw 2019). Marcus Shaw (2019) explains that "the mass incarceration of marginalized groups plays a key role in sustaining inequality through limited intergenerational educational success" (286).

Although women are less likely to be incarcerated than men, female prisoners are more likely to have been primary caregivers for their children. Thus, the incarceration of women often means that children's lives are drastically altered, as they frequently find themselves in a new home, either with their father for the first time or with their grandparents. In the absence of any willing relative, many of these children end up in foster homes. When children are placed in foster care, parents face losing their children permanently. The 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) mandates the termination of parental rights once a child has spent more than fifteen months in foster care (Covington and Bloom 2003).

Children with incarcerated parents have been found to suffer mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and aggressiveness. Some

even exhibit symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder. These problems are exacerbated when a parent is incarcerated because of child or spousal abuse (Comfort 2007). Foster and Hagan (2009, 191) have "found strong evidence that the imprisonment of fathers has negative causal consequences for children." They further contend that economic disadvantages are only one of many that children of the incarcerated face: children also suffer educational and emotional disadvantages when their parents are incarcerated.

The Lifelong Stigma of a Felony: "The New Jim Crow"

In the 2016 presidential election, over six million adults in the United States were prevented from voting because of laws restricting voting rights for those convicted of felony-level crimes (The Sentencing Project 2016). Voting restrictions are just one way that former inmates face legalized exclusion. When a person is released from prison, he or she must not only figure out how to start anew with few resources, but also deal with life as a felon. In the United States, it is illegal to discriminate against people because of race, color, or national origin. However, it is perfectly legal to discriminate against a person because of a felony record. Felons can be excluded from employment, housing, voting, public benefits, and jury service. In many major cities, three-quarters of African American men have criminal records and are subject to legalized discrimination (Alexander 2010). Legal scholar Michelle Alexander (2010, 38) argues, "Today a criminal freed from prison has scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a freed slave or a black person living 'free' in Mississippi at the height of Jim Crow."

SELF-ASSESSMENT 11.4: Beyond Incarceration: Collateral Consequences

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Conclusion and Discussion

Legal scholar Michelle Alexander (2010) made the case that mass incarceration is the civil rights issue of the twenty-first century. She contends that because incarceration has become a common life event for African Americans, and because it is legal to discriminate against felons, our criminal justice system systematically denies rights and opportunities to African Americans, effectively replacing openly racist policies of the past. According to Alexander, "today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans. Once you're labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination—employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service—are suddenly legal" (2010, 2). As discussed previously, she even goes so far as to contend that "today a criminal freed from prison has scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a freed slave or a Black person living 'free' in Mississippi at the height of Jim Crow" (138). What do you think? Is mass incarceration the "New Jim Crow"?

RESEARCH FOCUS

Can Felons Get Jobs?

Sociologist Devah Pager (2007) deployed a field experiment to find out how severe the stigma of a felony record is for people released from prison and whether the stigma varies racially. Pager sent two White applicants to apply for 150 jobs. She assigned them identical credentials, except that in some cases, the White applicant had a criminal record, and in other cases the White applicant did not have a criminal record. She found that the White person with the criminal record received a callback subsequent to a job application 17 percent of the time. In contrast, the White person without a criminal record received a callback 34 percent of the time. In other words, not having a criminal record doubled the chances of a callback for the White jobseeker.

Then, Pager sent out a pair of Black jobseekers to apply for 200 jobs. In their case, the jobseeker with a criminal record received a callback in only 5 percent of cases, as compared with the non felon, who received a callback in 14 percent of cases. Notable here are that (1) a White felon had a better chance of getting a callback than a Black nonfelon; (2) a White felon was one-half as likely as a White nonfelon to get a callback, whereas a Black felon was only one-third as likely as a Black nonfelon to get a callback; and (3) Black felons got callbacks only 5 percent of the time, meaning that, on average, they would have to apply for twenty jobs just to get one callback, whereas White nonfelons would have to apply for only three.

Callback Percentages for Job Applicants in Pager's Study

	Black Men	White Men
Felons	5%	17%
Nonfelons	14%	34%

These findings led Pager to argue that because of stereotypes about Black criminality, employers tend to think that a Black person with a criminal record is a criminal, whereas they are more likely to see a White person with a criminal record as someone who made a mistake but is essentially a good person. Pager refers to incarceration or a felony on the record as a "negative credential" insofar as it makes it more difficult for felons to get jobs. Because of this negative credential, about 75 percent of people released from prison are unable to find work in the first year after their release.

Sociologist William Julius Wilson (2009) has argued that discrimination is no longer a determining factor for Black Americans and that instead, inequality between Black people and White people can be explained largely by structural changes in the economy. Devah Pager's findings indicate that individual-level discrimination also plays a role in blacks' relatively high rates of unemployment. For African Americans, the mark of a felony on their record makes it very difficult for them to find employment. In addition, this mark does not go away with time.

For Discussion

1. Why do you think a White felon has a better chance of getting an entry-level job than a Black nonfelon?
2. Pager argues that having a felony is a "negative credential." Are there any other characteristics jobseekers might have that also could be negative credentials?
3. Do you think that Pager would have had different results if she had included women in the study? How so?

Source: Pager 2007.

Mass incarceration has been condoned by American voters because crime control is considered a crucial element of a safe society. However, the

evidence presented in this chapter makes it clear that mass incarceration is not an effective crime control strategy. Moreover, the consequences of zealous law enforcement have been felt more deeply in already-disadvantaged communities. What if, instead of creating a safer society, mass incarceration has been the root cause of poverty, violence, and instability in U.S. cities?

The incarceration rate appears to have leveled off in recent years, largely because the global economic crisis has required states to cut back expenditures—the highest of which are related to criminal justice. In short, states do not have the budgets to incarcerate more people. But the question of whether we will witness yet another turn in the history of criminal justice is an open one.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 11.5: Conclusion and Discussion

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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

11.1 What factors explain the rise of mass incarceration in the United States?

- The United States has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world. Moreover, Black and Latinx men are disproportionately affected by harsh crime-control policies.

Review

» What is the difference between crime rates and incarceration rates?

» Explain the trends in property crime and violent crime rates between 1970 and 2000. Compare these trends to in carceration rates. What differences do you see?

» How do incarceration rates in the United States compare to those of other developed countries?

» Why does the author argue that the United States is in an era of mass incarceration?

Critical Thinking

» What unique features of the United States might play a role in its high incarceration rates?

» How has the War on Drugs affected mass incarceration?

11.2 How are disparities in the criminal justice system reflective of institutional racism?

- The high rates of incarceration for Black and Latinx men can be traced to racial profiling and sentencing disparities. Racial ideologies of Black male criminality have serious implications for the lives of African American men.

Review

» How does racial profiling affect incarceration rates?

» What roles do individual racism and institutionalized racism play in maintaining the high rates of incarceration for African Americans?

» What are three reasons African American men are seven times more likely than White men to be incarcerated?

Critical Thinking

» Why do you think police officers are more likely to conduct drug raids in low-income, Black neighborhoods than in wealthier, primarily White neighborhoods?

» What role might individual discrimination play in maintaining the high incarceration rates for African Americans?

11.3 How is the rise of mass incarceration tied to large-scale economic trends?

- Mass incarceration came about at the same time that inner cities began to lose jobs. There are profit motivations behind private prisons, and certain groups have benefited economically from mass incarceration.

Review

» How is economic restructuring related to incarceration and crime rates?

» What is the prison-industrial complex?

» How did the Great Recession affect incarceration rates?

Critical Thinking

» Evaluate the evidence presented in this chapter for the connection between economic trends and mass incarceration.

11.4 What are the collateral consequences of mass incarceration?

- Mass incarceration affects the two million people behind bars and the seven million people under criminal justice supervision. It also affects millions of felons in the United States and their families and children.

Review

» What are some of the ways that mass incarceration affects men and women differently?

» What parallels does Michelle Alexander draw between the Jim Crow Era and the present era?

» How are children affected when their parents are incarcerated?

Critical Thinking

» Evaluate the human cost of incarceration: in what ways, beyond financially, does the United States pay for mass incarceration?

Talking about Race

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. In a discussion, consider why incarceration rates in the United States continued to increase in the 1990s even as crime rates fell. How are our distinctively high incarceration rates related to ideas about race? For a contemporary example, you may be able to compare responses to the current rise in heroin abuse versus the rise in crack abuse during the 1980s.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 11.6: Check Your Understanding

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LIST OF KEY TERMS

1984 Crime Control Act

Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986

Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988

deindustrialization

Neoliberalism

outsource

prison-industrial complex

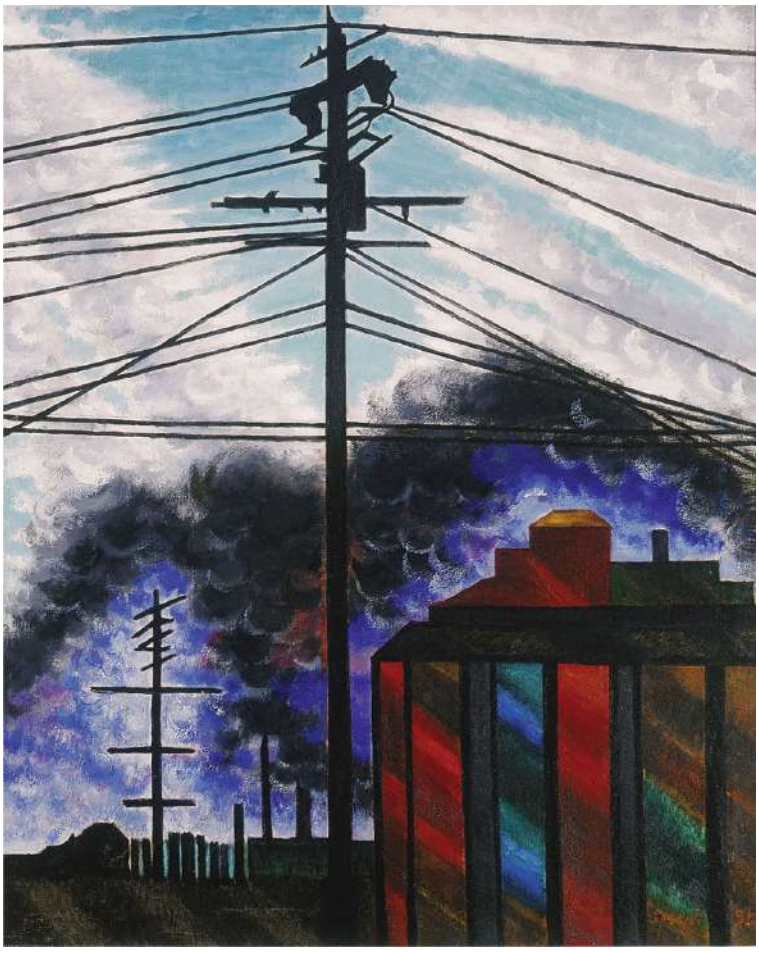
Racial profiling

Reaganomics

12

Health Inequalities, Environmental Racism, and Environmental Justice

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced



Telegraph Poles with Buildings. Joseph Stella. 1917. Oil on canvas, 36 1/4 × 30 1/4 in. (*Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago/Art Resource, NY*)

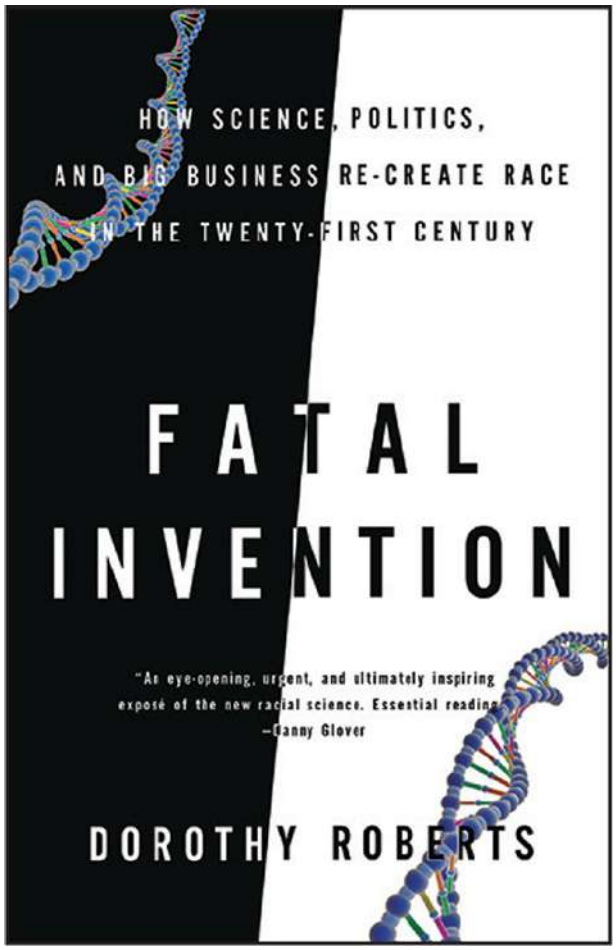
As You Read

12.1 What is the racial history of health disparities in the United States?

12.2 How do health disparities in the United States today vary by race and ethnicity?

12.3 What are the effects of environmental racism?

12.4 What are some community movements for environmental justice?



> Thus far, we have examined racial inequalities in education, in the labor market, in housing, and in the criminal justice system. The accumulated disadvantages for non-White people, what Joe Feagin (2001) calls "systemic racism," are also found in the areas of health and the environment. Racial inequalities in the United States diminish not only opportunities for non-White people, but also the most valuable asset we have—our time on earth. A twenty-five-year-old African American can expect to live five years less than a twenty-five-year-old White American. Black and Latinx people are much more likely than White people to live in neighborhoods with toxic waste facilities. How do we begin to make sense of the cost of racial inequality when we learn that racism literally kills? In *Fatal Invention*, Dorothy Roberts offers poignant reflections on racial disparities in health.

Imagine if every single day a jumbo jet loaded with 230 African American passengers took off into the sky, reached a cruising altitude, then crashed to the ground, killing all

aboard. According to former surgeon general David Satcher, this is exactly the impact caused by racial health disparities in the United States. In a 2005 article, he and several other health experts reported that there had been 83,570 “excess” black deaths in 2002. That represents the number of African Americans who would still have been alive that year if their life expectancy were the same as that of whites. The number of excess deaths is closer to 100,000 today. In one generation, between 1940 and 1999, more than 4 million African Americans died prematurely relative to whites. Overall life expectancy is actually declining in some counties where there is a high proportion of African Americans.

In my hometown of Chicago, one third of all black deaths are excess in terms of the black–white mortality gap. In other words, one out of every three black people who died in 2000 would have survived if black and white death rates were equal. Chicago is a very segregated city, so longevity varies geographically. Of Chicago’s seventy-seven community areas, the twenty-two with the lowest life expectancies are more than 90 percent black. There is a difference of sixteen years between the white neighborhood with the highest life expectancy and the black neighborhood with the lowest. Black people are more likely to die prematurely (before the age of sixty-five) from most major illnesses: cancer, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease, AIDS, and coronary heart disease, to name a few. Race matters at the beginning of life as well. Black infants are almost three times more likely than white infants to die before their first birthday. Blacks also spend a greater portion of their lives in poor health. They experience a rate of preventable hospitalizations more than double that of whites. “That’s not a racial health *gap*: it’s a *chasm* wider and deeper than a mass grave,” says Harriet Washington, whose book *Medical*

> *Apartheid* chronicles medical experimentation on black Americans from colonial times to the present.
>
> Similarly dreadful statistics are available for other U.S. minority groups, including Latinos and Native Americans. Recent immigrants from Latin America tend to be in better health than white Americans, despite having higher rates of poverty and less access to health care—a curiosity known as the "Hispanic Paradox." But their health advantage disappears in the generation born in the United States. Latinos and blacks are about twice as likely as whites to have diabetes. In November 2009, President Barack Obama convened the largest gathering of Indian tribal leaders in U.S. history—bringing together representatives from more than five hundred tribes—to discuss their urgent health needs. "Native Americans die of illnesses like tuberculosis, alcoholism, diabetes, pneumonia and influenza at far higher rates," Obama said.
>
> *Source: Roberts 2012, 81–82.*

What explains these disparities in life expectancy? The answers we provide to such questions are perhaps as important as the lives at stake.

In this chapter, we will explore the complexities of racial inequalities in health and the environment. This discussion will shed light on why non-White people have lower life expectancies than White people, as well as a host of other facts related to health disparities. We will continue to consider the effects of racial ideologies by asking, "How have unequal health outcomes been explained in the past, and how do these explanations relate to changing racial ideologies over time?"

The History of Health Disparities in the United States

Disparities in life expectancy for Black people and White people in the United States are not new. Medical treatment of African Americans during and since slavery has been at best subpar and at worst deadly. It is not difficult to imagine that the lives of people of African descent were devalued in the past, but a look into the history of health disparities and medical care also gives us insight into present-day inequalities.

Involuntary Experimentation on African Americans

During slavery in the United States, medical care was brutal and ineffective for most people. Slaves in particular suffered in innumerable ways under the care of physicians, and they had no option to refuse treatment. The accounts that remain about the treatment of slaves by southern doctors provide a window into some of the brutality slaves endured. One account is that of John Brown, who escaped from slavery and lived to tell his story.

In 1847, a formerly enslaved person who had been known as “Fed” escaped to England, where he took on the name John Brown. In his memoir, Brown describes how he was subjected to medical experimentation in Georgia in the 1820s and 1830s. Dr. Thomas Hamilton had cured Brown’s former master of an illness and, in exchange, asked to perform experiments on an enslaved person. John Brown describes several sets of experiments Dr. Hamilton performed on him. The first was to subject him to extreme levels of heat in order to find

a treatment for sunstroke. The next set involved letting him bleed every day. Then Dr. Hamilton burned Brown in an effort to see how deep his Black skin went. Brown explained that Dr. Hamilton "also tried experiments upon me, which I cannot dwell upon" (quoted in Washington 2006, 54). We can only imagine what those experiments involved.

Dr. Hamilton's tactics, unfortunately, were not an isolated case. The famed American doctor James Marion Sims (1813–1883) is sometimes called the father of American gynecology. A lesser-known fact about Dr. Sims is that he used involuntary subjects—many of them enslaved African Americans—for experiments. During the nineteenth century, vesicovaginal fistulas (abnormal passages connecting the bladder and the vagina that often developed as a result of childbirth) were a serious problem for women of all races. In developing a cure for the fistulas, Dr. Sims carried out a series of painful operations on enslaved women.

Sims convinced the owners of eleven enslaved women with the condition to lend the women to him for treatment. It took Dr. Sims scores of experimental operations to arrive at his cure: silver sutures to prevent infection. One of the enslaved women, named Anarcha, was seventeen when she came under his care in 1844. She developed a fistula and a torn vagina after a forceps-induced birth to a stillborn baby. Sims repeatedly sewed up Anarcha's vagina, yet it became infected every time, and he had to painfully reopen the wounds. Sims knew about anesthesia but refused to administer it to Anarcha or to the ten other women. When Sims began his experiments, he worked with several other doctors who helped him hold down the women as he performed the surgeries. Within a year, however, all the other doctors left, as they could not bear to hear the screams of the women. From then on, the enslaved women had to hold one another down as Sims operated without anesthesia. In 1849, Sims at last announced that he had found the cure and succeeded in repairing Anarcha's fistula. It remains unclear whether he repaired the fistulae of the other ten enslaved experimental subjects. This example is one of many situations in which treatments that would primarily benefit White

people who could afford a doctor were first tried in an experimental fashion on slaves (Washington 2006).

The practice of using involuntary Black experimental subjects continued after slavery and involved both live and dead bodies. In 1989, construction workers in Augusta, Georgia, uncovered nearly 10,000 human bones and skulls beneath what was once the Medical College of Georgia. This discovery led to an appalling finding: in the nineteenth century, doctors at the Medical College of Georgia had ordered porters at the college to remove bodies from nearby cemeteries for medical dissection. Most were removed from an African American burial ground. Overall, 75 percent of the bones belonged to African Americans, even though Black people made up less than half of the local population. When Harriet Washington (2006) researched the grave-robbing, she discovered that faculty at the Medical College had sent a slave called Grandison Harris to pull bodies from graves. Harris continued to work at the Medical College and to rob African American graves after emancipation until his death in 1911.

Dr. James Marion Sims carried out horrific operations on enslaved women such as Anarcha without their consent.

Involuntary experimentation continued well into the twentieth century, as evidenced by the infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiment (discussed in Chapter Three). One area of research in which Black people were disproportionately affected is the experimental use of radiation. In 1945, an African American truck driver named Ebb Cade was in a serious accident. When he arrived at the hospital in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, doctors determined that he would not survive his injuries. Unbeknown to Cade, the doctors were under contract with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and had been waiting for a moribund patient so that they could test the effects of plutonium, a radioactive element used in nuclear weapons and reactors. Without Cade's consent, they injected him with plutonium. The doctors' expectation was that Cade would soon die, but they hoped to keep him alive long enough to see the effects of the high dose of radiation on his body. In order to do so, they extracted bone chips

and pulled fifteen of his teeth. Cade recovered, however, and escaped from the hospital six months later. He returned to his home in Greensboro, North Carolina, where he died in 1953 of heart disease, unrelated to his injection (Washington 2006).

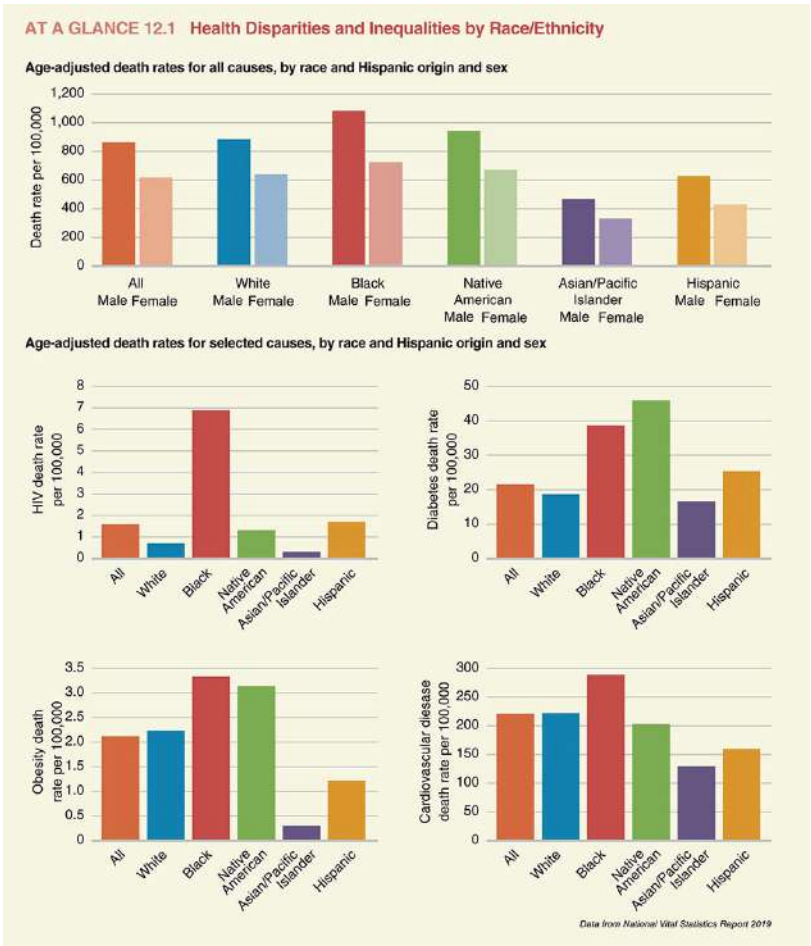
In 1953, the U.S. Department of Defense adopted the **Nuremberg Code** Under this policy, any research subject has to be provided with information about the nature, duration, and purpose of the research before participating in it. Subjects also have to be informed that their participation in any research project is voluntary. Despite this order, approximately fifty more experimental radiation treatments on uninformed subjects occurred during the 1960s and 1970s (Washington 2006).

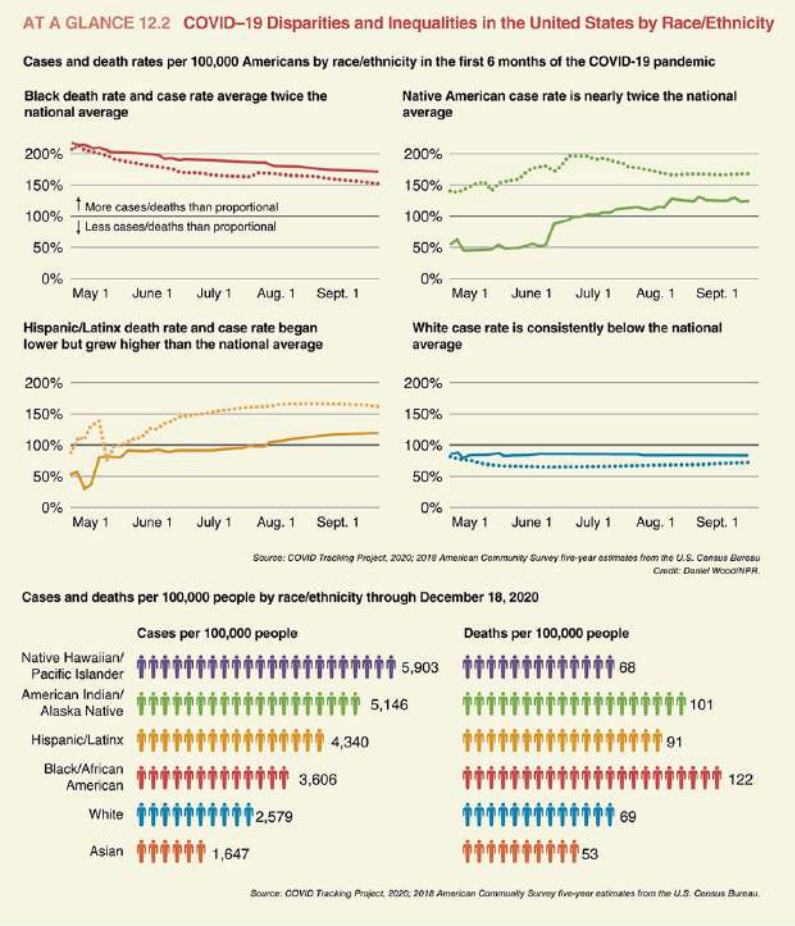
SELF-ASSESSMENT 12.1: The History of Health Disparities in the United States

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Explaining Health Disparities by Race and Ethnicity Today

African Americans at every age are more likely than any other racial group to die. They are twice as likely as White people to die of diabetes, almost eight times as likely to die of homicide, and almost nine times as likely to die of AIDS. Overall, Black people have a 17 percent higher age-adjusted death rate than White people for all causes and can expect to live about four years less than White people (CDC 2019). Sociologists have offered a range of theories to explain these and other health disparities by race and ethnicity, as we will explore in this section.




AT A GLANCE 12.2 COVID–19 Disparities and Inequalities in the United States by Race/Ethnicity
Cases and death rates per 100,000 Americans by race/ethnicity in the first 6 months of the COVID-19 pandemic
Black death rate and case rate average twice the national average
Native American case rate is nearly twice the national average
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
↑ More cases/deaths than proportional
↓ Less cases/deaths than proportional
May 1
June 1
July 1
Aug. 1
Sept. 1
Hispanic/Latinx death rate and case rate began lower but grew higher than the national average
White case rate is consistently below the national average
Source: COVID Tracking Project, 2020; 2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau
Credit: Daniel Wood/NPR
Cases and deaths per 100,000 people by race/ethnicity through December 18, 2020
Cases per 100,000 people
Deaths per 100,000 people
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander
5,903
68
American Indian/ Alaska Native
5,146
101
Hispanic/Latinx
4,340
91
Black/African American
3,606
122
White
2,579
69
Asian
1,647
53
Source: COVID Tracking Project, 2020; 2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Socioeconomic Status and Health Disparities by Race/Ethnicity

First, we should note that health disparities are clearly linked to socioeconomic status. These disparities are evident in our earliest records and have been found in every country where they have been examined: people with higher incomes live longer, healthier lives. Moreover, it is not just poverty that affects health—relative poverty is also important. One way this relationship can be seen is through a comparison of life expectancies in Japan and Great Britain. In 1970, these two countries had similar life expectancies and similar levels of inequality. Over the next two decades, inequality increased dramatically in Great Britain while it narrowed in Japan. By 1990, Japan had the highest life expectancy in the world, while Great Britain's had declined (Williams and Collins 1995).

Every step up in income and wealth translates into an increased likelihood of having good health. However, once we begin to parse these outcomes by race, a different story emerges. African Americans do not experience the same health gains as White people do by virtue of an increase in socioeconomic status—though they do experience some health gains. There is clearly a relationship between health and socioeconomic status, but these factors work in different ways across racial and ethnic lines.

Black/White disparities do not disappear as African Americans gain more education and income. In California in 2014, 6.7 percent of babies were born with low birth weight. Black women were twice as likely to have low-birthweight babies as White women. Over 10 percent of babies born to Black women with a college degree had low birth weight, as compared to 8 percent of babies born to White women without a high school degree. At all levels of education, Black women have the highest prevalence of low-birthweight babies (Ratnasiri et al. 2018).

Babies born with low birthweight are at a higher risk for death, making birthweight an important factor for health scholars to consider. As shown in Figure 12-1, African American mothers with college degrees are more likely than White people, Hispanics, and Asians with less than a high school education to have low-birthweight babies (Ratnasiri et al. 2018).

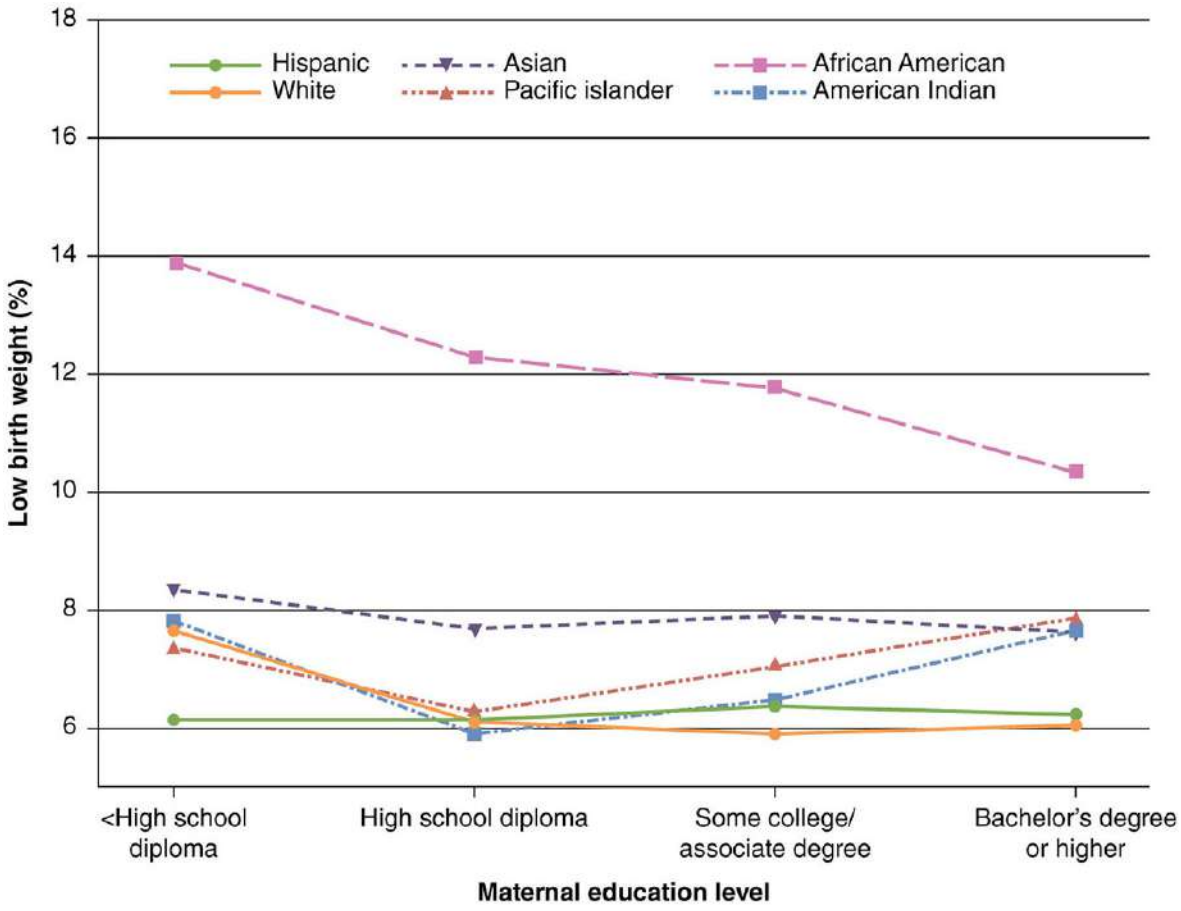


FIGURE 12-1 Low Birthweight among Mothers Twenty Years of Age or Older, by Race/Ethnicity and Education of Mother Source: Ratnasiri et al. (2018).

Researchers continue to investigate why African American women have poorer birth outcomes than White women. Furthermore, why is it the case that health outcomes for African Americans do not improve with higher levels of income and education? If socioeconomic status alone does not explain these disparate outcomes by race and ethnicity, what does? Sociologists and public health scholars have offered several different explanations, which we will consider next.

Segregation and Health

David Williams and Chiquita Collins (2001) argue that racial residential segregation is the primary cause of Black/White health disparities

because it affects the educational opportunities of children, concentrates poverty and resources, and forces many African Americans to live in environments that are unhealthy on a variety of levels. Williams and Collins suggest that segregation has adverse health outcomes for Black people because it creates "pathogenic residential conditions"—unsafe streets where people are scared to exercise, have few opportunities to buy fresh produce, see more advertisements for alcohol and tobacco, and live with higher rates of violent crime. One study in Baltimore, for example, found that neighborhoods with a high percentage of African Americans are more likely to have liquor stores than are White communities (LaVeist and Wallace 2000). People living in disadvantaged neighborhoods also have higher incidences of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, tuberculosis, infant mortality, and hypertension.

Availability of healthy food is one way that segregation can affect health outcomes. A study in New York compared East Harlem, which is 6 percent White, with the Upper East Side, which is 84 percent White. East Harlem has the highest prevalence of diabetes and obesity in New York City, whereas the Upper East Side has the lowest. The researchers who carried out the study wanted to know if stores in these neighborhoods carried foods that doctors recommend for people with diabetes. They surveyed stores to find if they had diet soda, 1 percent or fat-free milk, high-fiber bread, fresh fruit, and fresh vegetables. They found that Upper East Side stores were three times as likely to carry all of the recommended food items as East Harlem stores (Horowitz, Colson, Hebert, and Lancaster 2004). The lack of access to healthy food in poor neighborhoods is a national problem (Ghosh-Dastidar 2014).

RESEARCH FOCUS

Racial Capitalism: A Fundamental Cause of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Inequities in the United States

Whitney Pirtle argues that racial capitalism is a fundamental cause of COVID-19—meaning that racial capitalism fundamentally influences how the disease spreads and reproduces itself. In Michigan, only 14 percent of residents are Black, yet 40 percent of people who had died from COVID-19 by April 3, 2020 were Black. Pirtle argues that racial capitalism helps us to understand this disparity. Black people in Detroit are more likely to have health problems such as diabetes, which can exacerbate COVID-19 symptoms. Racial capitalism led to the development of racial segregation in Detroit. People living in racially segregated, deprived neighborhoods have less access to green spaces and are over-exposed to toxins. Racial capitalism also shapes access to resources which can prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as the ability to order groceries, purchase protective equipment, and information about how the disease spreads. Pirtle contends: "Racialized capitalist pursuits have left behind the poor, people of color in Detroit, devaluing life so much that it is being easily snatched up by the novel coronavirus pandemic" (Pirtle 2020).

Pirtle's reflections are echoed by a Black physician in Detroit: Geneva Tatem, a pulmonary and critical care doctor, who notes,

"Being the only Black pulmonary and critical care physician at my hospital has made my experience very different than everyone around me.

Our hospital is in Midtown Detroit. Detroit is 80 percent African-American. Looking around the I.C.U. and seeing who's here, at first you say, OK, what I'm seeing is just reflective of the local population. But once I started to see numbers coming out of New York, coming

out of Chicago, coming out of New Orleans, I realized maybe it's not just a local phenomenon.

I've had parents of my friends die. I've had multiple church members die. I've had people within my community that I know personally die. And so that's an additional layer of feeling isolated. Anyone who's ever been through grief and loss understands that feeling of isolation. Even though people may express sympathy, they just cannot understand what you're dealing with because they're not in your situation.

A crisis really magnifies the disparities that are already there. Access to care, bias in care. When you have a population that doesn't have running water because of water shut-offs, how do people wash their hands and maintain basic hygiene in a pandemic? When I sit back and think about those things, I can't help but get upset and frustrated. You wonder about basic humanity when it's acceptable to society to have people who don't even have running water." (Tantum 2021)

As of early June 2020, there were 58,035 known cases of COVID-19 in Michigan. Nearly two-thirds of those cases were in the greater Detroit metropolitan area. And, 77 percent of the deaths in Michigan happened in this metropolitan area. (Nann Burke 2020)

The highest COVID-19 death rate in Michigan is in zip code 48325, which is 97 percent African American, and has a high poverty rate—just what we would expect during a pandemic under racial capitalism.

Persons of low socioeconomic status and Black and Latinx people all have higher obesity rates than the general population. One possible explanation for this disparity is the resources available in the neighborhoods where they reside. Public health scholars have found that people who live close to supermarkets and have safe places to exercise are less likely to be obese. Low-income and non-White people are more likely to live far from supermarkets with healthy produce and closer to fast-food

outlets and convenience stores. They are also more likely to live in areas where crime is higher, making it less safe to walk around the neighborhoods. By concentrating poverty and people of color, segregation can contribute to higher levels of obesity in these groups (Lovasi, Hutson, Guerra, and Neckerman 2009).

Residents of low-income neighborhoods often have limited access to fresh, high-quality produce.

Chapter 12.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Native Americans, African Americans, and Latinx people are about twice as likely as White people to die from diabetes (National Vital Statistics 2020). These disparities are closely related to diet. What people eat is a result of their personal food preferences as well as what food is available where they live. The Tohono O'odham and Pima Indians of southern Arizona have the highest rate of type 2 diabetes in the world—nearly 50 percent of the people in their community have diabetes. A century ago, there were almost no cases of diabetes among these Native American tribes. What happened? The film *Bad Sugar* explains that the Tohono O'odham diet changed when the government cut off their irrigation water supply, preventing them from growing their own food. Instead of growing and eating the food they had eaten for centuries, they consumed food from the U.S. Commodity Supplemental Food Program (Adelman 2008). Prior to 1999, this program included no fresh produce. When the Tohono O'odham people began to consume large amounts of white flour, shortening, sugar, and canned foods, their diabetes rate skyrocketed. We see similar patterns, though not as drastic, in Black and Latinx neighborhoods, which have high concentrations of fast-food restaurants and corner stores selling many more packaged, processed foods than fresh produce. Diet is influenced by what food is available, and what we eat affects our health outcomes.

VOICES

I’m Sick of Asking the Children of Flint to Be Resilient by Mona Hanna-Attisha

A baby born in Flint, where I am a pediatrician, is likely to live almost 20 fewer years than a child born elsewhere in the same county. … Some of the babies I care for have the bad luck to be born into neighborhoods where life expectancy is just over 64 years. Only a few miles away, in a more-affluent community, the average life span is 84 years. The ravages of Covid-19, which disproportionately affect low-income families and people of color, are surely widening this gap even further.

Throughout the United States, geography defines and describes inequities in health, wealth, mobility and longevity. The reasons for this are both visible and hidden. Life in a distressed neighborhood means limited access to health care and healthy food. It means living with violence, racism, poverty and uncertainty. It means bearing the brunt of environmental injustice—not having safe and affordable water, as Flint knows too well, or living in the shadow of a polluting factory. More air pollution increases rates of respiratory disease and reduces student achievement as well as life span. We are also beginning to understand the interplay of water access and air quality with Covid-19 severity.

These disparities between neighborhoods are rarely accidental; they are the product of purposeful policies and practices that have widened gaps in income, opportunity and equality. Over the decades, city inhabitants have been battered by deindustrialization; racist banking and real estate practices; white flight and population loss; austerity cuts to public education, public health and safety net programs; the corporate-driven weakening of unions; dilution of environmental regulations; housing and nutrition insecurity; and racially driven mass incarceration. And so much more.

Science tells us that children exposed to multiple adversities, both in their home and in their neighborhood, have a far greater likelihood of challenges later in life. From addiction to eviction, these constant pressures change children on a molecular, cellular and behavioral level —and make them sick. The effects of toxic stress can be as disruptive as environmental pollution on their bodies and brains, increasing risk for chronic diseases like asthma and hypertension, and lowering life expectancy. Exposure to six or more adverse childhood experiences can cut a life short by as much as 20 years.

The pandemic hot spots in Michigan follow this pattern: Outside of metropolitan Detroit, the troubled Flint area has been hardest hit. In Flint, we just marked the sixth anniversary of the water crisis, when poisonous, lead-laced water was used to fill baby bottles and sippy cups of unsuspecting Flint kids who just happened to be born in the wrong city. Now we're being ravaged by another preventable public health emergency. With over 200 deaths, the county where Flint is has more Covid-19 fatalities than 19 states to date.

All of us who live or work in this beleaguered community know somebody who has died from the disease caused by the coronavirus. There's Wendell Quinn, the gentle giant of a hospital public safety officer who always gave me a warm smile and a nod when I walked into work; and Ruben Burks, the dedicated United Auto Workers leader; and Nathel Burtley, the first black superintendent of Flint schools; and Karen Dozier, the kind and loving custodian at the early child care center. And bringing a level of grief that is difficult to comprehend, Calvin Munerlyn, a Family Dollar store security guard and devoted father of six, was recently shot and killed after telling a shopper to wear a mask. The epidemic of gun violence has compounded tragedy upon tragedy.

At a multigenerational level of loss, there are the Jones and Brown families. Within weeks, a Flint elementary school principal, Kevelin B. Jones II, lost his father, Pastor Kevelin B. Jones; his uncle Freddie Brown Jr.; and his cousin Freddie Brown III. At the

combined burial for her husband and only child, Sandy Brown waved to the parade of cars that drove by quietly as she stood alone next to two freshly dug graves. Reflecting on the difficult losses, a church elder, Keimba Knowlin, spoke on resilience, a quality that I've long observed and admired in the people of Flint. "We're going to rise above this and get past this," he said.

The will to survive and endure can be the deciding factor between a child who overcomes adversity and thrives and a child who never makes it to adulthood. But how long can we ask people born in the wrong ZIP code to "rise above" and persevere in circumstances beyond their control, no matter how central the idea of overcoming is to our archetypal American identity? When Hazim Hardeman, a 2019 Rhodes scholar, was asked about his journey from public housing in North Philadelphia, where many of his friends were shot or stabbed to death, he spoke a truth that we all need to hear: "Don't be happy for me that I overcame these barriers. Be mad as hell that they exist in the first place."

Surviving life's hardest blows should not be celebrated—or expected. Recovery and reconciliation require reparations and resources. To expect resilience without justice is simply to indifferently accept the status quo.

Just as the New Deal sprang from the Great Depression and public health best practices were born in response to a previous plague, we need to embrace the bold innovations that are certain to arise.

To begin with, we need to establish policies and practices rooted in science. And science tells us that where you live matters. For children raised in places replete with the stresses of misfortune, these adversities rooted in historic and systemic bias are scarring. Just as new Covid-19 cases can represent a time lag from infection two weeks earlier, adversities in early childhood play out later, filling our hospital beds and deteriorating the public's health.

As this pandemic makes painfully visible, medicine alone—ventilators, pharmaceuticals, defibrillators, I.C.U.s—will not save us.

It's always an ego-deflating moment for my medical residents when they learn that medical care contributes only 10 percent to 20 percent to positive health outcomes. Our medical interventions are largely reactive measures—and happen too late. Addressing the upstream root causes is the only answer.

This means mandating universal basic income and living wages, for a start, and enhancing health and safety protections, along with benefits like paid parental and sick leave. This means establishing desegregated and well-funded public education, starting with child care, as a fundamental right. Universal health care needs to be untethered from employment and free of racial disparities. And environmental health regulations need to be strengthened and enforced so that all children—no matter the ZIP code—can breathe clean air and drink safe water.

These big and bold ideas are not new. They are measures proved to improve health, quality of life and longevity—standards that most developed countries already employ. And to ensure we are moving in the same direction together, the pathogens of divisiveness and bigotry need to be treated as the deadly, life-shortening contagions they truly are.

This is how we begin to transform the concept of resilience from an individual trait to one that describes a community—and society—that cares for everyone. Rather than hoping a child is tough enough to endure the insurmountable, we must build resilient places—healthier, safer, more nurturing and just—where all children can thrive. This is where prevention and healing begin.

Source: Hanna-Attisha 2020

The Effects of Individual Racism on Health

To explain why African Americans have the worst health outcomes on nearly every measure, some scholars point to perceived discrimination. They argue that African Americans are disproportionately exposed to racial discrimination, that discrimination can produce stress, and that stress can lead to negative health outcomes. When African Americans experience discrimination, their responses may include anger, resentment, fear, frustration, and other stress responses. Scientists have found that these responses cause the adrenal gland to produce hormones that inhibit immune responses and increase vulnerability to disease (Clark, Anderson, Clark, and Williams 1999).

Although African Americans have higher levels of most physical ailments, they have lower levels of mental illness (Louie and Wheaton 2019). The relatively low rates of mental illness among African Americans are noteworthy because Black youth are much more likely to have experienced traumatic events such as death of a relative, parental divorce, witnessing domestic violence, seeing someone get murdered, being mugged or threatened with a weapon, going to prison, or failing a grade in school than White adolescents (Louie and Wheaton 2019; Umberson 2017). Patricia Louie and Blair Wheaton (2019) found that Black youth have higher levels of self-esteem than White youth and that these higher levels of self-esteem help Black youth deal with these traumatic events and reduce the likelihood that they will develop depression or other mood disorders.

Public health scholar James Jackson and his colleagues (Jackson, Knight, and Rafferty 2010) contend that African Americans have developed coping strategies that enable them to deal with stress (such as that related to individual racism), but that these same coping strategies ultimately have negative physical health outcomes. For example, many African Americans are confronted with stressful conditions such as poverty, crime, poor housing, and racial discrimination. In response, many engage in unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, alcohol use, and overeating of fatty foods to alleviate stress. Jackson and his colleagues found that African Americans are likely to eat comfort foods to deal with stress

because fatty foods inhibit the release of certain hormones and do provide short-term stress relief. However, the consumption of these foods leads to long-term health problems, obesity, stroke, and cardiovascular disease. They argue that the consumption of comfort foods does help reduce stress in the short term, thus leading to lower levels of mental illness, but has long-term physical effects.

About half of all African American women are obese; the rate for White women, by contrast, is 30 percent. Christie Malpede and her colleagues (2007) explored the extent to which weight-related beliefs and attitudes are linked to obesity among Black and White women. When the researchers asked Black women how being Black affected their weight, the most common responses included the consumption of unhealthy foods and lack of exercise. In contrast, White women responded that being a White woman meant that they had distorted expectations of body type, that they thought their success depended on being thin and beautiful, and that they had negative body images. Overall, Black women talked more about food choices, and White women talked more about body image when asked about their weight-related beliefs.

The majority of the research on racism and health focuses on African Americans (Williams and Mohammed 2013). However, a few recent studies have shown similar patterns for other people of color. For example, Paradies et al. (2015) found a stronger association between poor mental health and racism for Asian Americans and Latinx people than for African Americans, whereas the association between racism and poor physical health is strongest for African Americans. In another study, Diane Lauderdale (2006) found that Arab women who gave birth in the six months following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, had a higher risk of poor birth outcomes than those who gave birth before 9/11. She attributes this higher risk to heightened discrimination against Arabs in the aftermath of 9/11. Another study found that infants born to Latinx mothers had a 24 percent higher risk of low birthweight after a traumatic immigration raid happened in Postville, Iowa (Novak, Geronimus, Martinez-Cardoso 2017). A study of emergency room care providers

found implicit biases against Native American adults and children, which are likely to affect their care in these settings (Puumala et al. 2016). Ongoing research in the area of racism and health will help us better understand these nuances, yet the current research demonstrates that racial discrimination continues to be prevalent in our society and leads to negative health outcomes for people of color.

Life-Course Perspectives

Health inequality increases with age across a range of outcomes. For example, older African Americans have significantly higher levels of daily function limitations and disability than do older White people. Because of this type of health disparity, scholars have offered **life-course perspectives**, which focus on how health outcomes change over the life course. Two of the most accepted life-course explanations are the **cumulative disadvantage perspective** and the **weathering hypothesis**. The first explanation focuses on how disadvantages accumulate over the life course, and the second focuses on how constant exposure to stress accelerates health declines for Black people (Thorpe and Kelley-Moore 2012).

The cumulative disadvantage perspective provides a framework to explain the increasing divergence between Black and White health outcomes. It focuses on the fact that many health conditions are related to stressors that accumulate over the life course. These stressors include poor nutrition, discrimination, and living in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Thorpe and Kelley-Moore 2012).

Scholars who adopt the weathering perspective contend that the health status of Black people declines more quickly than that of White people as a consequence of long-term exposure to unhealthy conditions. According to this perspective, Black Americans age more quickly than White people because of the social, economic, and environmental conditions they face. The focus in this perspective is on the effects of sustained stressors—

constant discrimination, financial stress, family crises, and fear—which can wear down the body in tangible ways (Thorpe and Kelley-Moore 2012).

Jan Warren-Findlow (2006) interviewed Black women with early-stage heart disease to better understand how the weathering perspective could be applied to their lives. She found that two-thirds of the women she interviewed were taking antidepressants or anti-anxiety medication as a response to high levels of stress. All of the women talked about being stressed for reasons such as family problems, neighborhood violence, and financial strain. One woman explained that the stress of living "one paycheck away from homelessness" was "killing" her. Warren-Findlow argues that high levels of stress over the life course of these African American women contributed to their development of heart disease and the worsening of their condition.

A recent study found that although African and Mexican Americans have worse health outcomes than White Americans overall, Mexican Americans do not experience cumulative disadvantage or weathering in the same way that African Americans do. Instead, Mexican Americans' higher likelihood of having serious medical conditions does not increase with age (Brown, O'Rand, and Adkins 2012).

Culture and Health

Is simply being or becoming an American bad for your health? The United States ranks fairly low for a country in the developed world on a wide range of health indicators. Moreover, immigrants often have better health than their native-born counterparts. In the United States, foreign-born women have substantially better pregnancy outcomes than women born in the United States. Gopal Singh and Stella Yu (1996) found that foreign-born women have lower infant mortality rates, lower rates of low birthweight, and lower rates of teenage births than their counterparts born in the United States. However, their study found some important

variations. The reduced risk for infant mortality is most pronounced among Cuban immigrants—compared with Cubans born in the United States, they have 39 percent lower risk. Black immigrants also are 25 percent less likely to experience infant mortality than native-born Black people. Overall, foreign-born Black people, Cubans, Mexicans, and Chinese have lower risks for infant mortality and low birthweight than their native-born counterparts.

Health outcomes for Latinx people compare favorably with those of other groups on a wide variety of measures. Recall At a Glance 12-1. In 2013, the age-adjusted death rate for Latinx people was lower than that of all groups except Asians, and Latinx women had the lowest rates of low-birthweight babies (Center for Disease Control 2016). And even though Latinx people have, on average, a lower socioeconomic status than White people, they have comparable infant mortality rates (Lara, Gamboa, Kahramanian, Morales, and Bautista 2005). Scholars have come up with many explanations for this phenomenon, which is known as the **Hispanic Paradox**.

One hypothesis to explain the Hispanic Paradox is that many Hispanics are immigrants and have better health behaviors than native-born Americans. There is some support for this explanation, but the results are mixed. Mariaelena Lara and her colleagues (2005), for example, found that Latinx people who are more acculturated into U.S. society are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as eating unhealthy foods, smoking, and drinking alcohol. In contrast, there were positive factors associated with **acculturation**, or the process by which immigrants adopt the behaviors and preferences of the host society: more acculturated Latinx people were more likely to go to the doctor, get preventative care, be screened for cancer, and have health insurance. Overall, the researchers found that acculturation has negative effects in terms of health behaviors, but positive effects in terms of health care usage and access.

GLOBAL VIEW

Health and Structural Violence in Guatemala

Many clear links exist between stress and health outcomes. Cecilia Menjivar's (2011) work on structural violence in Guatemala helps us better understand its effects on women's bodies. Menjivar's work with women in eastern Guatemala points to the physical expressions of violence that we can see in women's lives: headaches, nervous breakdowns, and constant stomach pain. Nearly all the women that Menjivar interviewed for her book spoke of some form of mental or physical ailment.

Many of the women ignored their own health issues because of societal pressures to put their husbands and children first. One woman, Gracia Maria, told Menjivar that she never complained about her own ailments because her children's and husband's health were all that mattered. Thus, even though Gracia Maria had an extremely difficult pregnancy with her fifth child and could not sit up for two months after birth, she acquiesced to her husband's desire and had another child. Other women explained that they stopped treatment for their own ailments if one of their children got sick and they needed the money to pay for their children's medicine.

Menjivar argues that the serious health issues the women she interviewed encountered were due to structural violence: poverty, isolation, interpersonal violence, patriarchy, and lack of access to health care. The extreme stress created by this structural violence has physical manifestations. One poignant example comes from a woman named Azucena. When her second daughter was born, Azucena's husband was out of town, and she had run out of food. Her neighbors gave her some tortillas, bread, and sugar, but she and her children were still hungry. She explained that the tension made her feel awful, "like cancer." Like many women, the extreme stress of poverty—combined with her husband ignoring her needs—created physical stresses on her body.

Menjivar's concept of "structural violence" is also a useful way to consider the relationship among health outcomes, race, gender, and poverty in the United States.

Source: Menjivar 2011.

Research by Edna Viruell-Fuentes (2007), however, challenges these findings on acculturation. Viruell-Fuentes acknowledges that Mexican immigrants often have better health outcomes than Mexican Americans; yet, she argues this is because Mexican Americans are more attuned to racial discrimination in the United States and that this discrimination leads to stress, which has negative effects on their health. Viruell-Fuentes's interviews with Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans shed light on the differences between these two groups. Mexican immigrants are likely to live in ethnic enclaves, where they have few interactions with non-Mexicans and thus are less likely to experience discrimination. In contrast, Mexican Americans experience persistent discrimination, exclusion, and "othering" beginning in elementary school. Mexican Americans recounted to Viruell-Fuentes that they grew up feeling angry about being excluded by White Americans. This exclusion was alienating and psychologically straining. Viruell-Fuentes argues that these stressors—not acculturation—can explain why Mexican Americans have worse health outcomes than Mexican immigrants.

Most of the research on acculturation and health has focused on Latinx people. However, there may be similar patterns for other groups. A recent study (Al Dahir et al. 2013) investigated the relationship between acculturation and diabetes risk among Arab Americans in southeastern Louisiana—a group that has higher than average rates of diabetes and other chronic diseases. The findings were mixed: men who were less acculturated to U.S. society had lower risk for diabetes, whereas women who were less acculturated had a higher risk. Across groups, immigrants tend to have worse health outcomes the longer they stay in the United

States. Research continues on why this is—and how to change it (Oza-Frank, Stephenson, and Narayan 2011).

RESEARCH FOCUS

Race, Disability, and Poverty by Maria Duenas

A 2017 report by the National Disability Institute showed major disparities between disabled people of color and able-bodied non-Hispanic White people. For example, prior studies have found that African Americans are more likely to have a disability compared to non-Hispanic Whites and this disparity increases as they age. Class disparities that disabled people of color face in comparison include lower educational attainment, lower employment rates, lower food security, and higher poverty rates. They are also less likely to have a bank account, seek medical care due to its high costs, and have a harder time paying medical bills compared to non-Hispanic White people. African Americans with disabilities in particular are more likely to use pawn shops, payday lenders, and tax-refund anticipation loans than any other group. These class disparities result in disabled people of color having a harder time moving to a higher socioeconomic status because they face more financial barriers that contribute to significant long-term health consequences. From a cumulative life disadvantage perspective, multiple systemic oppressions create disadvantages that accumulate over the life course for disabled, low-income people of color, demonstrating the need for an intersectional approach from the dimensions of race, ability, and socioeconomic status.

For Discussion

1. What are some examples of cumulative life disadvantages for disabled, low-income people of color?
2. How is intersectionality a useful framework in which to analyze health disparities?
3. Do you know of anyone who has experienced the

intersections of race, ability, and class health disparities over the life course?

Source: National Disability Institute 2017. https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/disability-race-poverty-in-america.pdf

Genetics, Race, and Health

Although most social scientists accept that there is no biological basis for dividing humans into distinct racial groups, it can be hard to fully divorce ourselves from the idea that there are races and that they are distinct. One area in which there is a lot of discussion of racial differences in in health disparities—as there are often stark differences between racial groups.

Asthma is the most common chronic childhood disease in the United States. Black and Latinx children are more likely to suffer from asthma than White children and are more likely to visit the emergency room due to an asthma attack. Black and Latinx children are also three times more likely to die from asthma than White children. Prior to 1980, these racial disparities in asthma prevalence did not exist. In the late 1980s, we began to see a disparity in asthma prevalence rates and by 2010, twice as many Black and Latinx children had asthma as White children.

It is certainly true that Black and Latinx children are more likely to suffer from asthma than White children. Most scholars, however, would attribute that disparity to the fact that Black and Latinx children are more likely to be exposed to toxins. Asthma is triggered by exposure to indoor toxins such as dust mites, cigarette smoke, mold, pet dander, cockroaches, and rodents as well as outdoor toxins such as traffic pollution, ozone and particulate matter, and toxic waste. Children who live in unhealthy environments are more likely to suffer from asthma.

Chapter 12.2 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

A 2007 report entitled *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty—1987–2007: Grassroots Struggles to Dismantle Environmental Racism in the United States* (Bullard 2007) used 2000 census data and databases of hazardous waste facilities to find out if there were racial disparities in the location of toxic waste facilities. The authors reported that the majority of people who lived within two miles of hazardous waste facilities were people of color and that those same neighborhoods were more likely to have hazardous waste facilities. Black and Latinx children are more likely to live in segregated, inner-city areas with poor living conditions where they are exposed to indoor toxins such as mold, rodents, and cockroaches. They are also more likely to live in areas with high rates of air pollution and near hazardous waste facilities. These toxins trigger asthma attacks.

Despite substantial evidence linking asthma to exposure to unhealthy living conditions, some scientists search for genetic explanations for racial disparities in asthma prevalence. What could their motive be? If there were a genetic basis for racial disparities in asthma prevalence, it would be unusual to see a change in the disparities in such a short time span, as evolution happens at a much slower pace. Nevertheless, some medical researchers seek out genetic explanations for racial disparities in asthma rates.

In *Fatal Invention*, Dorothy Roberts (2012) explains that a primary motive for seeking genetic explanations is profit potential. If diseases have genetic causes, corporations can design personalized medicine to cure them, and then sell these cures to people who can afford them. In contrast, there is no profit to be found in addressing deep structural inequalities that contribute to health disparities.

In the case of asthma, researchers have found that Puerto Ricans are more susceptible to asthma than Mexicans. Medical researcher Esteban Burchard attributes this disparity to the prevalence of African ancestry among Puerto Ricans and has thus spent his career searching for a genetic basis for this disparity. His goal is to create personalized medicine for people who suffer from asthma so that doctors can prescribe medicine based on a person's genetic makeup.

While researchers such as Burchard seek out genetic explanations, community activist groups advocate for better living conditions and a healthy environment for all children. After completing a community-based study of asthma disparities, a community group called We Act concluded that a comprehensive approach is required to address asthma disparities, one that takes into account the stress, poverty, poor housing, and lack of access to quality health care that many children of color face.

Myths that "Black" diseases exist may also motivate some researchers to seek genetic explanations for racial disparities in health. Many people, for example, believe that sickle cell disease is a Black disease, but this is not true. Sickle cell disease is common wherever malaria is common. Thus, you can find sickle cell disease in parts of Africa as well as in parts of Europe, Oceania, India, and the Middle East—all regions where malaria is common (Figure 12-2). In contrast, large swaths of Africa are unaffected by both malaria and sickle cell disease. If doctors were to look for sickle cell disease only in Black patients, they would risk the lives of many other patients who also are vulnerable to the disease. Sickle cell disease is more common among African Americans than other groups in the United States because the ancestors of many African Americans were from parts of Africa where malaria is common. African Americans whose ancestors came from other parts of Africa, however, are at much lower risk of sickle cell disease than people from Saudi Arabia, where malaria is also common.

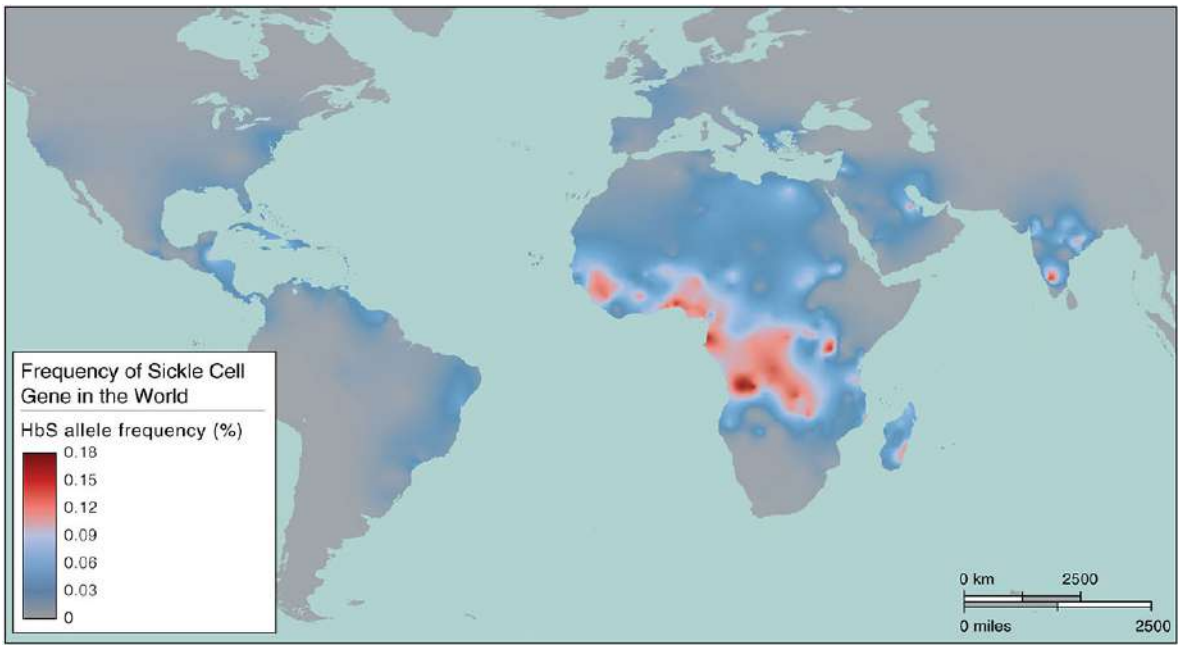


FIGURE 12-2 Frequency of Sickle Cell Gene in the World Source: https://www.ox.ac.uk/images/hi_res/15799_Sickle_cell_anaemia_MAP.jpg

Advances in genomic mapping have made it possible to identify associations between genes and certain disease. For example, genomic mapping studies have found an association between the chromosome 22q12 locus and the gene *APOL1*, and the propensity to develop end-stage renal disease. Notably, this association is not the same as causation—less than 15 percent of people with this genetic variation will develop end-stage renal disease, and many people without this genetic variation will also develop end-stage renal disease. This genetic variation has been traced to genetic mutations in certain populations in Africa about 60,000 years ago that granted protection against trypanosomal infection (sleeping sickness). About 15 percent of African Americans have this genetic variation, and these variants are nonexistent among other groups (Reidy, Hjorten, and Parekh 2018). Current research thus indicates that this genetic variation is exclusive to the African American population. However, 85 percent of the Black population does not have this genetic variation as this variation is exclusive to those parts of Africa where sleeping sickness is prevalent. And although Black people are at higher

risk of end-stage renal disease, this illness is neither exclusive to Black people nor to those with this genetic variation (Assari 2016).

The simple fact that Black people are more likely to have sickle cell disease or end-stage renal disease or that there are genetic variants associated with these diseases does not mean that there is any scientific evidence for genetic variation between racial groups. Scientists discovered decades ago that most genetic variation occurs within—not between—racial groups. And, these findings continue to hold up as genomic mapping becomes more advanced.

In health sciences, race is often used as a stand-in for a more precise genetic explanation. Neither sickle-cell anemia or end-stage renal disease are "Black diseases." Instead, they are diseases more prevalent among people with ancestry in certain regions of the world, and these regions do not map neatly onto race. In other cases, racial associations are unrelated to genetics. For example, if researchers find that a certain glaucoma drug works better for Black people, the most likely explanation is that the drug actually works better for people with dark eyes and thus could be harmful for Black people with light eyes. Or a drug found to require a low dose for Asians could be related to weight, not to Asian ancestry. When scientists find that drugs work better for some races than for others, or in different doses depending on race, these racial explanations are most likely explained by another factor. Racial dosing and racial prescribing are imprecise and potentially harmful because race is always a stand-in for a better explanation (Roberts 2012).

SELF-ASSESSMENT 12.2: Explaining Health Disparities by Race and Ethnicity Today

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Environmental Racism

As discussed earlier, African Americans and Latinx people are more likely to live in neighborhoods where they have less access to fresh produce, parks, jogging trails, and healthy foods. In addition, people of color and poor people are also more likely to live close to places that can directly damage their health—toxic waste dumps, highly polluted freeways, and other environmental hazards. In this way, health disparities can be linked directly to **environmental racism**: institutional policies and practices that differentially affect the health outcomes or living conditions of people and communities based on race or color. The disparities between the living conditions of White and non-White communities are clear.

In the United States, poor people and people of color are more likely to be exposed to environmental hazards. Black children are five times more likely than White children to have lead poisoning. More than 68 percent of African Americans live within thirty miles of a coal-fired power plant, compared with 56 percent of White Americans. In 2000, neighborhoods with hazardous waste facilities were, on average, 56 percent non-White, and neighborhoods without such facilities were 30 percent non-White. In the southeastern region of the United States—the area once dominated by enslaved people and slaveowners—three out of four of the largest hazardous waste landfills can be found in majority-Black areas (Checker 2006). Commercial hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities sited between 1966 and 1955 were placed in locations that were disproportionately poor and non-White at the time of siting; not surprisingly, those neighborhoods have become poorer and more non-White over time (Mohai and Saha 2015). As shown in Figure 12-3, neighborhoods with hazardous waste facilities—called host areas—have, on average, higher percentages of people of color than nonhost areas.

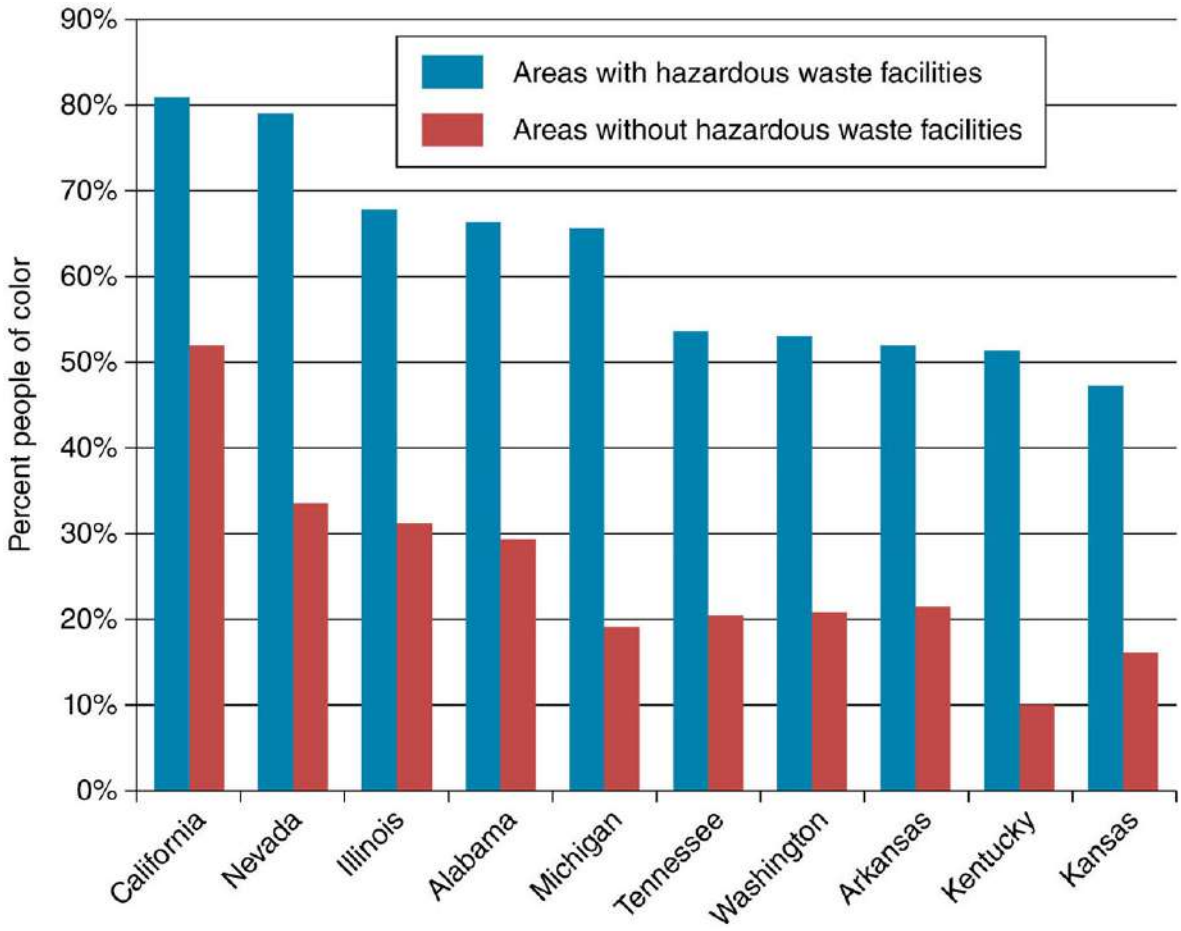

FIGURE 12-3 Percentages of People of Color Living in Neighborhoods with and without Toxic Waste Facilities, in States with the Largest Discrepancies Reprinted, by permission, from Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty 1987–2007: A Report Prepared for the United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries— www.ucc.org/environmental-ministries_toxic-waste-20. Figure 4.3 Copyright © March 2007 by the United Church of Christ. All rights reserved.

The placement of hazardous waste facilities affects community health. The lack of basic plumbing also has serious consequences and renders communities vulnerable to a host of diseases. In 1950, 27 percent of houses in the United States lacked complete plumbing facilities. By 2000, this percentage had dropped to 0.64 percent—a great improvement. However, nearly 700,000 households, representing 1.7 million people in the United States, continued to live without complete plumbing facilities in 2000, and a half a million households in 2014 still were without plumbing (Byrne 2015). The lack of plumbing continues to disproportionately affect non-White people. In 2000, 0.47 percent of

White people lived without plumbing, compared with 1.1 percent of Black people; 1.47 percent of Hispanics; and 4.41 percent of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, primarily concentrated on reservations (Rural Community Assistance Partnership n.d.).

Latin American immigrants are also disproportionately exposed to toxins and their concomitant risks. Camila Alvarez and Kathryn Norton-Smith (2018), who measured estimated cancer risk from air toxins in immigrant communities, found that the destinations to which Latin American immigrants were moving had higher than average estimated cancer risk from air toxins. They further found that rates of estimated cancer risk from air toxins are highest in Latinx destinations; however, they are highest in early new destination counties. Whereas early new destination counties have a cancer risk of 39.80 people per million people; recent new destinations, 36.91; established destinations, 32.34; and nondestinations, only 31.14—a difference of 8.66. The implications of the discrepancy in estimated cancer risk from air toxins are likely exacerbated in new immigrant destinations because they, especially more recent destinations, tend to lack the infrastructure (government and nonprofit institutional support) for helping marginalized immigrant groups.

Faced with these disparities, communities around the United States have fought to have their communities cleaned up and to gain better access to clean air, water, and soil. These struggles can be contentious, and the possible outcomes are not always clear. What does a community do when it realizes that a toxic waste dump is in its backyard? Should everyone leave? They can't, in good conscience, sell their properties, so are they stuck? As profiled in the Voices sidebar in the next section, the struggles of the Holt family in Dickson, Tennessee, put a human face on widespread environmental injustices.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 12.3: Environmental Racism

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Environmental Justice

The movement for **environmental justice** focuses on the right to live in nontoxic neighborhoods. Many scholars locate the beginning of the environmental justice movement in the 1980s, when primarily non-White communities began to come together and insist on their right to live in nontoxic neighborhoods. Melissa Checker (2006) traces this activism back to earlier struggles to get city services in low-income and primarily Black communities. Dorceta Taylor (2009) agrees and argues that Black people's fights for lead screening, Chicano and Filipino struggles against the use of pesticides in agriculture, and Native Americans' battles for fishing rights in the 1950s and 1960s are all part of the movement for environmental justice. Environmental justice movements fight for causes ranging from the creation of parks and open spaces to clean-up efforts by toxic waste producers to clean air and water and other initiatives to improve the health and quality of life in neighborhoods.

VOICES

The Holt Family of Dickson, Tennessee

Dickson, Tennessee, is a town of 12,244 located about thirty-five miles west of Nashville. In 1946, the city of Dickson purchased seventy-four acres of land to be the city's open, unlined dump. In 1964, the Scovill-Schrader automotive company opened a plant that manufactures automotive tire valves and gauges, producing a large amount of hazardous waste. It is no coincidence that both of these hazardous waste sites were opened in the primarily Black neighborhood of Eno Road. Dickson County covers nearly 500 square miles. In 2000, the town was only 4.5 percent African American. However, the only cluster of solid waste facilities in the county is located in the Eno Road community.

In 1988, government officials discovered trichloroethylene (TCE)—a suspected carcinogen—in a well that belonged to a Black family, the Holts, who lived just fifty-four feet from the Dickson County Landfill. However, government officials told the family that they could continue drinking the water. A couple of years later, similar levels were found in a White family's well, and they were told not to drink the water. By 2000, every member of the Holt family had health problems, including various forms of cancer. In that same year, the Holt family well was retested. This time, Environmental Protection Agency officials found twenty-four times the recommended amount of TCE in the Holt family's drinking water. At that point, the family was given access to city drinking water—years after White families had been provided with that option.

In 2008, the Holt family filed a lawsuit against the Dickson City and Dickson County governments, seeking redress for the harm inflicted on their family by the contaminated water and racial discrimination. In 2011, the family reached a settlement with the city and county governments for over $5 million. In addition, they were awarded a $1.75 million settlement for racial discrimination, since

the county had responded to complaints by White residents but not by Black residents.

This type of legal victory is relatively rare, as it can be hard to prove that disparities are the result of racial discrimination. Despite the difficulties involved in bringing lawsuits, movements for environmental justice have sprung up around the country.

Source: Bullard 2007, 2012.

Melissa Checker (2006) conducted an in-depth study of Hyde Park, a Black community near Augusta, Georgia, that has long struggled for environmental justice. In 1970, Hyde Park residents won a two-year struggle to get sewage, paved roads, and running water in their community. In many ways, this was both an environmental battle and a battle against racism, as the conditions in the neighborhood during heavy rains were toxic, and the White neighborhoods had long had adequate city services.

In Hyde Park, the struggle for environmental justice is clearly linked to the fight for civil rights. In the late 1960s, Hyde Park residents formed an organization called the Hyde and Aragon Park Improvement Committee (HAPIC) to fight for better services for their neighborhood. This same organization survived over many decades and evolved into a movement for environmental justice during the 1990s, when it became clear that many of the nearby factories were emitting toxic chemicals and poisoning the community. Residents of Hyde Park became increasingly incensed as a junkyard in their neighborhood continued to expand—at times practically into their backyards—and when dust from a ceramics factory left White powder sprinkled on their cars and smelly waters filled their ditches during heavy rains.

Residents began to tie these environmental hazards to high rates of disease and death in their small community of 250 people. For Hyde Park residents, the environmental hazards were evident in the fact that whereas they once were able to grow bountiful gardens, their plots

became less productive after the factories and junkyards moved in. In 1991, researchers from the University of Georgia confirmed their suspicions when they found elevated levels of arsenic and chromium in the local soil and produce and warned residents not to eat the produce from their gardens.

Around that same time, residents of the neighboring Virginia subdivision filed a lawsuit against Southern Wood Piedmont—the local wood-processing plant—for contamination. Although the neighborhoods are very close and the same water travels between them, the primarily White residents of the Virginia subdivision did not include Hyde Park residents in their lawsuit.

Hyde Park residents decided to file their own lawsuit in 1991. When the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) tested the air, water, and soil in Hyde Park, they found weak evidence of contamination. However, when HAPIC commissioned its own studies, a neuropsychologist found a high degree of neurological abnormalities among residents, and a dermatologist found a high rate of arsenical keratosis. For Hyde Park residents, it was clear that they had a high number of health issues and that their neighborhoods were toxic and filled with smelly air and water. EPA testers, however, were unable to find conclusive evidence of a connection between contamination and their illnesses. In all, Hyde Park residents filed three separate lawsuits between 1991 and 1995. One was dismissed, and fifteen years later, the other two were still pending. At the end of the twentieth century, Hyde Park residents were finally able to secure government grants to clean up the toxic waste near their neighborhood and to clear out a junkyard. The struggle for a clean environment, however, continues (Checker 2006).

Residents of Hyde Park near Augusta, Georgia, faced a long struggle for environmental justice as factories and junkyards polluted their community.

How is the fight for environmental justice in Hyde Park tied to race? Many of the residents of Hyde Park interpret their experiences through a racial lens: the failure of the local, state, and federal governments to respond to their need is part of a history of exclusion that African Americans have faced since slavery. Additionally, African Americans are more likely to live in toxic neighborhoods than White people—meaning that we can tie their plight to structural racism in the United States insofar as environmental rules, laws, and policies reproduce historical racial disparities.

The struggle in Hyde Park is decidedly local: residents of this Georgia community experienced the direct effects of the emission of toxins by industrial facilities that were right in their community. They won a small victory when some of the toxic waste was cleaned up. But where did that waste go? It is conceivable that it went to another country. Ninety percent of the hazardous waste in the world is produced in industrialized nations such as the United States, Japan, and European countries. Much of it is eventually shipped to Latin America, the Caribbean, South and Southeast Asia, and Africa. In some cases, environmental clean-up in the United States can have detrimental effects on poor countries that accept the hazardous waste in exchange for much-needed cash (Pellow 2007).

The United States has only 5 percent of the world's population, yet generates 19 percent of the world's waste. The waste output of residents of

the United States is the highest in the world (Pellow 2007). Within the United States, there is continued controversy over what to do with the waste. One solution is to incinerate it. However, this produces incinerator ashes, which also must be disposed of.

In 1986, the mayor of Philadelphia found himself with 15,000 tons of incinerator ash, and nowhere to dump it. Local environmental activists had succeeded in closing the Kinsley landfill, and Philadelphia found itself with tons of ash. The city contracted a local company to get rid of the ash, which in turn handed it over to Amalgamated Shipping, a company headquartered in the Bahamas. The shipping company loaded the ashes onto the *Khian Sea*, and the ship set sail for the Bahamas on September 5, 1986. However, officials in the Bahamas refused to accept the toxic waste, which then traveled to the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Guinea-Bissau, Puerto Rico, Bermuda, and the Dutch Antilles. Each port refused to accept the waste. Finally, in December 1987, the boat landed at Gonaives, Haiti, where the captain was able to work out an agreement with the military regime, in part because he told them the ash was fertilizer. The crew succeeded in unloading 3,700 tons of ash onto the beach before local activists and authorities became suspicious and were able to stop the dumping. The ship left Haiti, leaving the ashes on the beach. The *Khian Sea* continued its journey, unable to get rid of the remaining waste. The ship's captain later admitted he dumped the ashes in the middle of the Indian Ocean several months later. But, the 3,700 tons of ash dumped on the beaches of Gonaives still remained. It took years of local and international activism until the toxic ash was finally removed from Haiti in April 2000.

The story of the *Khian Sea* is part of a story of global environmental injustice. Wealthier countries consume more resources than poorer ones and thus produce more waste. This global inequality is exacerbated when wealthy countries dump their waste in poorer countries. These inequalities are also drawn along racial lines: western European countries and the United States attempt to dump their waste in Africa and the Caribbean.

VOICES

The Flint Water Crisis

In March 2016, the Flint Water Advisory Task Force Report found that the residents of Flint, Michigan, a majority-Black and overwhelmingly poor city, had been exposed to environmental and health hazards due to water-supply decisions made by city officials. The report also showed that these decisions were made with outright disregard for the lives and health of the residents of Flint, Michigan.

Residents of Flint pick up bottled water and water filters from Red Cross disaster relief volunteers.

For nearly five decades, Flint had obtained clean drinking water from Lake Huron, the third largest body of fresh water in the world. Beginning in June 2012, however, in an effort to save money, Flint city officials began to seek out alternative water sources. At the time,

Flint was on the verge of financial collapse, and the city was being run by a governor-appointed emergency manager, Darnell Earley. City officials calculated that Flint could save $200 million over twenty-five years if it built its own pipeline to derive water from the Karegnondi Water Authority (KWA). However, by 2014, it became clear that the transition to the KWA would be delayed. Officials then decided to connect a temporary pipeline to obtain water from the Flint River, beginning in April 2014.

City officials received advice that they should add an anticorrosive element to the water, but they decided not to do this because it would cost $100 a day. The Flint River water was highly corrosive, however, and shortly after the switch to it, residents began to complain about the water's smell and color. In August 2014, test of the water revealed the presence of *E. coli* and total coliform bacteria. Residents were advised to boil their water before consuming it. They began to complain of skin rashes and hair loss, among other issues, as they became ill due to the water. City officials ignored nearly all complaints. In fall 2014, only one complaint was finally answered—that of General Motors.

The owners of the General Motors factory in Flint had become concerned about the water quality, as it was causing their car parts to corrode. In October 2014, they complained to Governor Rick Snyder, who used $440,000 of state funds to reconnect the factory to the Lake Huron pipeline. Nevertheless, the other residents of Flint remained connected to the contaminated Flint River water.

In January 2015, Flint was found to be in violation of the Safe Drinking Water Act. A month later, the water was found to contain extremely high levels of lead, a highly toxic element. In September, a local study reported that following the switch to the Flint River water, twice as many children under the age of five had elevated levels of lead in their blood.

In October 2015, Flint switched back to the Lake Huron water supply, but the corroded, lead-tainted pipes were still in use. One year later, in 2016, many residents continued to distrust the city's

government and to doubt the water's safety. Two years later, in 2017, Flint still did not have clean water.

Sources: Bosman, Davey, and Smith 2016; Kennedy 2016; *New York Times* 2016; Sanburn 2017.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 12.4: Environmental Justice

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Conclusion and Discussion

During slavery, medical professionals had no qualms about using slaves as involuntary subjects in medical experiments. We no longer live in such brutal times, but we can't ignore our legacy. One hundred and fifty years after the abolition of slavery, White people continue to receive better medical care than Black people. Moreover, it is hard to say that White and Black lives are equally valued when Black life expectancy continues to be years lower than that of White people.

The ability to breathe clean air, eat healthy food, have access to good medical care, and spend time outside in green spaces all lead to better health outcomes. In this way, the movement for environmental justice is intimately tied to the fight against health disparities.

Outright disregard for people of color informed the decisions made by industry and local leaders in the early twentieth century to place toxic waste facilities in primarily non-White neighborhoods. These same sentiments meant that non-White neighborhoods and towns were often the last to receive sewage infrastructure and piped water in their homes. By 2000, most communities had clean water, but non-White households continue to be the most likely to lack basic services.

Social scientists and public health scholars have provided the data we need to see the persistence of these disparities. These scientific studies leave little room for doubt that White Americans, on average, have better access to clean air and water and healthy communities than do non-White Americans. People of color in the United States and around the world are the most likely to have to contend with the health and environmental consequences of toxic dumping.

How do we explain these disparities? In each chapter, we have seen how racial ideologies help explain and justify inequalities. When looking at health and the environment, we can also uncover ideologies that serve this purpose, such as the misconception that African Americans are not interested in healthy eating and exercise. Such ideologies blame African Americans for their high prevalence of heart disease and diabetes while overlooking the structural reasons for health disparities, such as the lack of fresh vegetables and safe places to exercise in Black neighborhoods.

One of the United States' core values is the right of everyone to have an equal opportunity to flourish. How does the ideology of equal opportunity coexist with the reality that non-White people have less access than White people to education, to jobs, and to services and circumstances that promote health? How is this discord related to racial ideologies?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 12.5: Conclusion and Discussion

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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

12.1 What is the racial history of health disparities in the United States?

- During and even following slavery, African Americans were subjected to involuntary experimentation that was often brutal and had no therapeutic effects.

Review

» What is involuntary experimentation?

» Why was the Nuremberg code important?

Critical Thinking

» Why is it important to understand the history of health injustice in the United States?

» What factors led doctors to conduct cruel experiments on African Americans?

12.2 How do health disparities in the United States today vary by race and ethnicity?

- African Americans have lower life expectancies than White people, and racial disparities in health can be found from the womb to the deathbed. Many of these disparities are due to structural and individual-level discrimination.

Review

» Describe the differences in infant mortality rates for Black and White women.

» How are health disparities related to segregation?

» Why has diabetes become a problem for Native Americans?

» How can racial discrimination affect health?

» What is a life-course perspective on health disparities?

» What is the Hispanic Paradox?

Critical Thinking

» How does our understanding of health disparities change when we take into account both race and socioeconomic status?

» Is segregation at the root of health disparities? Or are there more deeply rooted causes? Explain your position.

» What role do you think acculturation plays in explaining the Hispanic Paradox?

12.3 What are the effects of environmental racism?

- Black and Latinx neighborhoods are more likely to host toxic waste facilities than White neighborhoods. These facilities have negative health outcomes for the residents.

Review

» How prevalent is environmental racism?

Critical Thinking

» What are some reasons that genetic explanations for health disparities may be problematic?

12.4 What are some community movements for environmental justice?

- The fight for clean neighborhoods has come to be called the environmental justice movement.

Review

» How did the environmental justice movement get started?

Critical Thinking

» How is the fight against toxins in Hyde Park related to race and racism?

Talking about Race

In light of this chapter's data on racial disparities in health outcomes, consider the findings most relevant to your own experiences. What information in this chapter could you draw from to have a conversation about health disparities and environmental racism in your community? For example, does your family live in a neighborhood with access to healthy food and green spaces? What structural explanations might explain why or why not? How are racial ideologies used to explain persistent health disparities?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 12.6: Check Your Understanding

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

LIST OF KEY TERMS

- acculturation
- cumulative disadvantage perspective
- environmental justice
- environmental racism
- Hispanic Paradox
- life-course perspectives
- Nuremberg Code
- weathering hypothesis

13

Racism, Nativism, and Immigration Policy

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

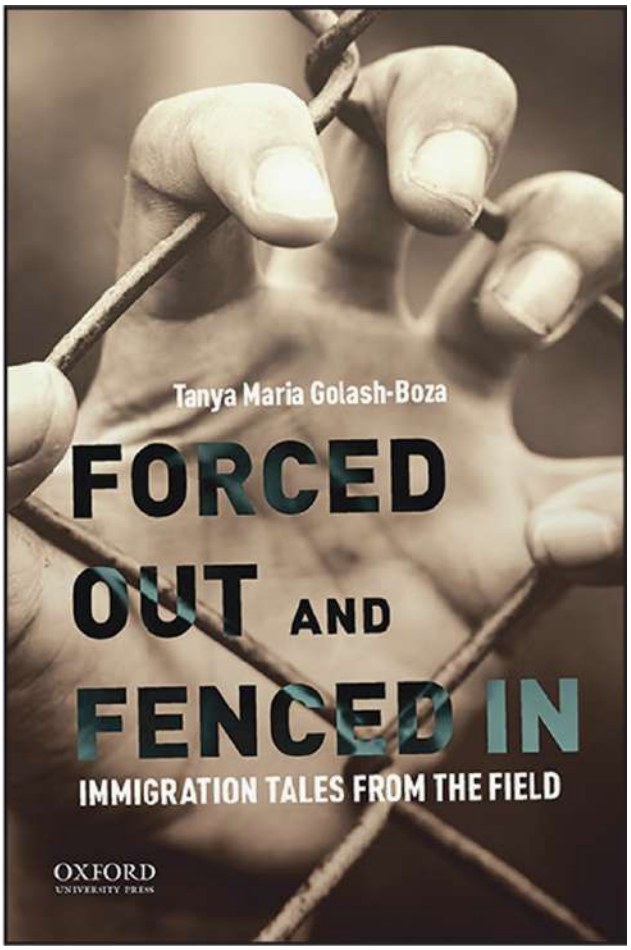
Homeless. Dane Chanase. 1930. Oil on panel, 72 × 48 in. (*Photograph by Meredith Keffer, courtesy of Beverly Sacks Fine Art Inc.*)

As You Read

13.1 How does the history of U.S. immigration policy reflect racism and nativism?

13.2 How has U.S. policy responded to undocumented immigration?

13.3 What is the relationship between nativism and racism in the twenty-first century?



> Article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)—which the United States has ratified—states, “[T]he family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state.” It further states that all men and women have the right “to marry and to found a family.” Because the United States has ratified this covenant, we have a responsibility to uphold these principles. Immigration law, however, is often at odds with the human right to have a family. The story of Ramón and Lupita illustrates how U.S. immigration policy can tear families apart.

Ramón and Lupita met in California in 1995. They were both originally from Mexico City, and both had migrated to California as young adults in search of work. Ramón arrived in California in the early 1980s as an undocumented immigrant, and in 1986, he applied to become a lawful permanent US resident through the IRCA amnesty program.

Lupita came to the United States without papers in 1992, after the amnesty program had ended.

When Ramón and Lupita got married in the late 1990s, Ramón could have filed a petition for Lupita's lawful residency then. But the wait for such a process was long—about four years at the time—and a new law, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996, had made the process more difficult. Lupita and Ramón were afraid they might be separated if they filed, and they decided to wait and hope for another change in law, maybe even another amnesty program, that would allow Lupita to change her status without risking separation from Ramón.

Over the course of the next ten years, Ramón and Lupita lived in California as a mixed-status family, and they had three US citizen children together—all boys. In 2005, they moved to Chicago and bought a house on the city's south side. Then, in 2008, Ramón became a US citizen. Because he was now a US citizen, the process for getting Lupita's residency would be much shorter. And with no immigration reform on the horizon, they decided to stop waiting and apply to change Lupita's immigration status.

Ramón and Lupita consulted with an attorney and began filing the paperwork and paying the fees they would need for Lupita's application for a "green card," or immigrant visa that confers lawful residency. First, Ramón filed a "family petition," which would make Lupita eligible to apply for a green card based on their marriage. After that petition was approved, Lupita received a notice in the mail with the date and time of an interview with a US Department of State official. Because Lupita is a Mexican citizen and she had never legally entered the United States, her interview was scheduled at the US consulate in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

> The week before Lupita's interview, on a warm June day in 2011, Ramón, Lupita, and their three sons drove to O'Hare airport, where Lupita boarded a plane headed for Ciudad Juárez. Lupita had to get a physical examination in Juárez, and then have her fingerprints taken before the day of the interview. On the morning of her interview, Lupita arrived at the US consulate in Juárez early. There were hundreds of people already lined up outside, most of them clutching thick files of paperwork. Lupita entered the consulate with her own thick file, was handed a number, and then sat down to wait for her turn to speak with an agent.
>
> When Lupita's number was called, she walked up to a long countertop, where an official was seated behind a thick pane of glass. Lupita slid her file under the glass and explained that she had come to the United States nearly twenty years earlier. Now that she had a US citizen husband and three US citizen children, she told him, she hoped she could change her status. The agent reviewed Lupita's paperwork, then informed her that her application for a green card was denied; in fact, he said, she would not be able to return to the United States at all. "For how long?" she asked him. "Ninety-nine," answered the officer. "Ninety-nine what?" Lupita asked. "Ninety-nine years." Stunned, Lupita left the consulate to call Ramón and break the news. When I met Ramón and the three boys at their Chicago home a month later, they were still in shock—reeling from the blow of Lupita's unexpected banishment and unsure how to move forward.
>
> *Source:* Gomberg-Muñoz in *Golash-Boza 2018*, *67–68.*

Lupita is one of thousands of people barred annually from returning to the United States, where her family lives. Lupita's application was denied because she had returned once to Mexico and reentered illegally. As her case shows, U.S. immigration policy is often harsh and unforgiving.

Today, as in the past, the country's punitive immigration policies primarily affect people who are considered non-White.

This chapter examines the history of immigration policy in the United States and the extent to which racist and nativist sentiments have played a role in this policy and legislation. Although U.S. immigration policy has shifted dramatically over the years, two trends have remained constant: (1) nativism has always been an integral part of policy debates, and (2) the policy and its consequences have been more disadvantageous to people considered non-White than to those considered White. What has changed over time is the removal of explicitly discriminatory language from U.S. immigration laws. Here we will consider the racially disparate consequences of immigration laws and policies.

As Robert Bautista's story in the Voices sidebar makes clear, U.S. immigration policy can be draconian—even long-term legal residents can have their rights stripped away for minor transgressions. In this chapter, we explore both the history of U.S. immigration policy and present-day laws and policies. This historical overview shows that immigration policy is severe in targeting people defined as outsiders to the nation. Lawmakers consistently have used immigration policy to influence the racial and ethnic makeup of the nation. In this process, racism has often become indistinguishable from **nativism**, which presumes the superiority of native-born citizens.

VOICES

Robert Bautista—Denied Due Process

In 2009, immigration agents arrested Robert Bautista as he was returning from vacation in the Dominican Republic, his country of birth. Once arrested, Mr. Bautista was placed in detention without the possibility of a bond hearing. He had been a legal permanent resident of the United States for twenty-five years, had been married for over a decade, had three school-age children, and was the owner of a successful business in Pennsylvania. His mandatory detention caused his business to be destroyed and his family to lose their home. His wife, a U.S. citizen, visits Mr. Bautista every week at York County Prison, often bringing the children with her. Their children, all of whom are U.S. citizens, must bear witness to their father being treated as if he were a criminal, but without the procedural protections normally accorded to people charged with crimes.

Mr. Bautista's two years in immigration detention are not pursuant to any criminal convictions. In 2002, Mr. Bautista was found guilty of third-degree attempted arson for carrying a container of gasoline near his own vehicle and was sentenced to five years of probation. By 2009, he had completed his probation. When immigration agents arrested and detained him, it was not because he was charged with a crime. Instead, he was detained because he faced deportation and was not eligible for a bond hearing.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) detained Robert Bautista on the grounds that his 2002 conviction of third-degree attempted arson was a crime involving moral turpitude (CIMT). Because of this prior conviction, Mr. Bautista was considered to be seeking admission to the United States, as if he were not present in the country and as if he had not been living and working lawfully in the country for over two decades. As a person not technically inside the United States, Mr. Bautista was not protected by the

Constitution. With a record of a CIMT, Mr. Bautista could still seek out cancellation of removal: his deportation order could be rescinded. Just one hour before his hearing, however, DHS made an additional argument: that third-degree attempted arson is also an aggravated felony, meaning that Mr. Bautista would be subject to mandatory detention and deportation without judicial review.

Mr. Bautista's lawyer, Raymond Lahoud, contested this classification, as no previous case of third-degree attempted arson had been declared to be an aggravated felony. If Mr. Bautista could win the argument that it was not, an immigration judge would have the chance to hear the equities in his case. But in an aggravated felony case, it does not matter if you have lived in the United States for three decades, if you have three children, if you have no relatives in your country of origin, or if your family depends on you for their survival. Noncitizens convicted of aggravated felonies are not given a fair and reasonable hearing of the sort that would meet international human rights standards.

In October 2011, the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) heard Mr. Bautista's case and decided that third-degree attempted arson is an aggravated felony. This determination means that Mr. Bautista could not challenge his deportation on the basis of his ties to the United States. Instead, he faced mandatory deportation to the Dominican Republic, where he would be labeled a criminal deportee and face a bleak future. The Dominican government treats arriving criminal deportees as if they are criminals. They are booked at the city jail, and their deportation is recorded on their criminal record, making it nearly impossible to secure employment.

If Mr. Bautista had been afforded the due process protections we give to criminals, he would have had a bond hearing and likely would not have been detained for over two years. Instead, he would have had the opportunity for a trial in which a judge could weigh the equities in his case, and he may have been eligible for a public defender. Mr. Bautista was fortunate that a lawyer decided to take his case pro bono. With the help of this lawyer, in February 2014, in

an appeals case, the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals found that third-degree attempted arson is not an aggravated felony, thereby overturning the BIA decision and permitting Bautista to apply for cancellation of removal.

Source: Golash-Boza 2012; *Bautista v. Attorney General of the United States*, No. A038-509-855 (3rd Cir. LAR 34.1(a) September 20, 2012).

Immigration policy continues to be at the forefront of the political agenda in the United States today. It is hard to imagine a time when the country had no immigration policy, yet just 100 years ago, there was no Border Patrol, and passports and visas were not required for entry to the United States. When the United States began to pass immigration laws governing the entry and residency conditions of the foreign-born at the end of the nineteenth century, the laws were overtly racialized and expressed a clear preference for people from northern and western Europe.

The Racialized History of U.S. Immigration Policy

The history of U.S. immigration policy is a reflection of societal racism and nativism. Whereas racism presumes the superiority of a racial group, nativism favors the allocation of resources to native-born citizens over immigrants and promotes a fear of foreign cultures. As various scholars have noted (e.g., Sanchez 1997; Johnson 2004; Lippard 2011), racist nativism is a prominent feature of contemporary American society: the fear of foreigners is clearly racialized, and nativist sentiments are directed at particular racial groups, such as Mexicans and people from the Middle East. Through an examination of the history of immigration policy and nativist responses to immigration, we will see how nativism and racism have been intertwined in U.S. history and how nativism today is distinct from that of the past.

U.S. Immigration and Deportation Policy

1790	1882	1924	1924	1924	1942–1964	1943	1950–1954	1965	1986
Naturalization Law	Chinese Exclusion Act	Immigration Act (Johnson-Reed Act)	Oriental Exclusion Act	Creation of Border Patrol	Bracero program	Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Act	Operation Wetback	Immigration and Nationality Act	Immigrati Reform an Control Ac

Chapter 13.1 Video

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Race and the Making of U.S. Immigration Policies: 1790 to 1924

The United States was a sovereign nation for a full century before immigration restrictions became a subject of political debate, let alone law. Although the country did not begin to pass immigration laws until the late 1800s, Congress passed an important piece of legislation in 1790 related to people born abroad. The Naturalization Law of 1790, discussed in Chapter Two, was not an immigration policy in that it did not regulate entry. Instead, it stated that only free White persons who had lived in the United States for at least two years were eligible for citizenship. This first piece of legislation related to the foreign-born is particularly notable because it contained a racialized provision, defining citizenship as accessible solely to White people. The purpose of this clause was to deny citizenship to African-descended enslaved people, and it was later used to deny Asians naturalization or the granting of citizenship after birth.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the first major piece of immigration legislation was the Chinese Exclusion Act, signed into law in 1882. This act denied entry to one specific group: Chinese laborers. In specifically excluding a group because of race and class, the Chinese Exclusion Act set the stage for twentieth-century immigration policy, which had both overt and covert racial and class biases (Lee 2002). Although the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943, the court cases that stemmed from it continue to shape how we treat immigrants today.

An 1893 landmark Supreme Court case, *Fong Yue Ting v. United States*, involved three Chinese nationals who claimed they deserved constitutional protections in their deportation cases. The court held that the power to deport noncitizens was inherent in the nature of sovereignty and that constitutional protections, including the right to a trial by jury, did not apply. This case defined deportation as simply an administrative procedure and not a punishment. The idea of deportation as a nonpunitive action was based on a distinction between deportation and banishment. Banishment removes a person from a country where he or she belongs, whereas deportation returns a person to where he or she belongs and thus is not considered punishment. According to the *Fong Yue Ting* decision, which still holds in court today, deportation is a procedure to ensure that people abide by the terms of their visas. When they do not, they face the possibility of being returned to where they belong. It is remarkable that this court decision, which was made in the context of strong anti-Chinese sentiment, continues to hold the status of legal precedent today.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in the midst of a great wave of immigrants from both Europe and China. In the 1840s, the United States began to experience large-scale immigration for the first time since its founding. This influx dramatically changed both the country's cultural landscape and its official stance toward immigrants. Between 1841 and 1850, 1.7 million immigrants arrived in the United States (see Figure 13-1), and in the following decade, 2.6 million arrived. In 1870, immigrants constituted nearly 14 percent of the total population. In each subsequent decade until 1924, millions continued to arrive. Toward the end of this wave of immigrants in the early twentieth century, the United States began to implement policies governing the entry of the foreign-born.

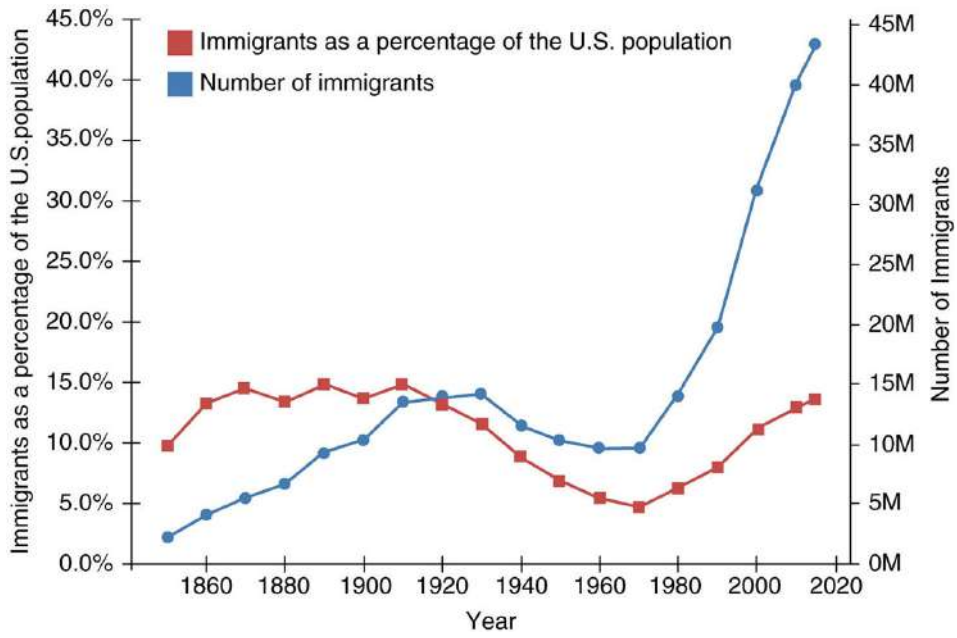


FIGURE 13-1 Immigrants as Total Number and as a Percentage of the U.S. Population, 1850 to 2015 Source: Migration Policy Institute (2015).

In 1924, the U.S. Congress implemented three restrictive measures that effectively cut off immigration from most countries. The first of these measures was the overtly racialized Immigration Act of 1924, or the Johnson-Reed Act (Chapter Two), which greatly reduced immigration from southern and eastern Europe by introducing quotas, or limits on the number of people from these countries allowed to enter the United States. The next major piece of immigration legislation was the 1924 **Oriental Exclusion Act**, which expanded the Chinese Exclusion Act and prohibited most immigration from Asia. The motivation for both of these laws, as explained in Chapter Two, was to improve the racial stock of the United States. The final measure implemented in 1924 was the creation of the Border Patrol to prevent illegal entry into the United States. These restrictive measures

were effective: immigration dropped drastically and did not pick up again until the 1960s, when the national origin quotas were expanded and the overtly racial nature of the immigration laws was rescinded.

GLOBAL VIEW

Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas

by Maria Duenas

In their book, sociologists David FitzGerald and David Cook-Martin (2014) examine the racist origins of immigration policies. They conducted document analyses of legal records from 1790–2010 for twenty-two countries. They found that democratic nations created policies that excluded immigrants based on race and ethnicity by deeming them "unworthy," "unfit," "unassimilable," and "undesirable." This contrasts the notion of democracy, which values equality for all.

The United States was the first country that created racist immigration policies that excluded predominantly immigrants of color. It was the first country to exclude Africans and Asians from becoming citizens using the rationale that they could not self-govern. Non-democratic countries such as Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Cuba were the first ones to change racist immigration policies for more inclusive ones. The United States and Canada eventually reformed their policies in the 1960s and Australia reformed its policies in the 1970s.

These researchers found several impetuses for why nation leaders changed racist immigration policies. One of the reasons was when one country shaped policies in nearby countries. A second reason was when policies change within a nation-state based on institutional, ideological, class, and race-based interests in the country. Racist policies of the day became to be viewed as antiquated and against the interests of the nation-state. The third and final reason is when global organizations and institutions, such as the United Nations, support or challenge the norms over time by making a call for revision of policies. Racist immigration policies continue today in new articulations. Their book underscores how race and ethnicity are significant components in developing immigration policies over time.

Source: FitzGerald and Cook-Martin 2014.

Racially discriminatory immigration policies were not unique to the United States. After the abolition of slavery in 1888, with a large formerly enslaved and free Black and mixed-race population, and under the specter of scientific racism, the Brazilian government openly promoted whitening through European immigration. In the four decades after emancipation, over two million European immigrants arrived in São Paulo alone, nearly a million of whom had their passages paid for by the state government (Andrews 1991, 54). This was an intentional, albeit failed, strategy to whiten the country. Brazilian intellectuals accepted European ideas of White superiority but rejected the notion that racial mixture was degenerative. Instead, they argued their country was becoming White through intermarriage and immigration Scholars such as Oliveira Vianna (1883–1951), a lawyer and historian, demonstrated that the Brazilian White population was increasing. Vianna compared Brazil's 1872 and 1890 censuses and argued that White people had increased from 38 to 44 percent of the Brazilian population, while Black people had fallen from 20 percent to under 15 percent (Skidmore 1993). Through a combination of European immigration and whitening through intermarriage, Brazilian intellectuals in the early twentieth century were confident their country would eventually become whitened (Andrews 1991; Skidmore 1993; Eakin 1985).

Nativism Between 1924 and 1964: Mass Deportation of Mexicans and the McCarran Internal Security Act

The period between 1924 and 1964 was an exceptional period in U.S. history in that the country welcomed relatively few immigrants. The 1924 measures significantly curbed the flow of immigrants until the 1965 overhaul of U.S. immigration laws. These trends are evident in Figure 13-1 and in Figure 13-2, which displays the number of people who attained legal permanent resident status by decade. A **legal permanent resident** is a foreign national who is granted the right to remain in the United States and who will be eligible for naturalization after a period of three to five years. To become a U.S. citizen today, a legal permanent resident must have been a permanent resident for at least five years if he or she is not married to a U.S. citizen for at least three years if he or she is the spouse of a U.S. citizen. The applicant must also be a person of good moral character; have basic knowledge of U.S. history and government; and, in most cases, be able to read, write, and speak basic English. In addition, the applicant must pay the filing fees, which were $725 in 2017.

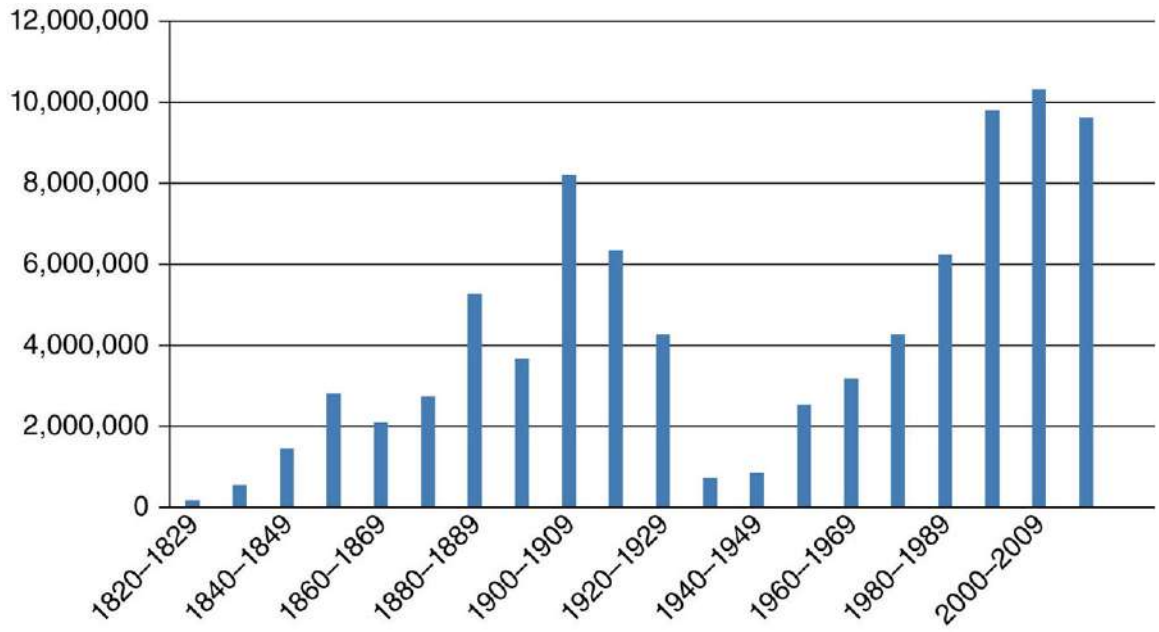


FIGURE 13-2 Number of People Attaining Legal Permanent Resident Status in the United States, 1820–2018 Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics (2018).

Mexicans have a long history of immigration to the United States. The first group of Mexicans to enter the United States were not immigrants, however, but became Americans following the U.S. takeover of large swaths of Mexican land under the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The first substantial wave of Mexican immigrants came between 1910 and 1930, when the Mexican immigrant population tripled from 200,000 to 600,000. This wave was due largely to instability caused by the Mexican Revolution and to the growth of agribusiness in the United States (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002; Ngai 2004; Hernandez 2010).

Mexican workers in a flax field, 1946.

The second wave of Mexican immigration came during the **bracero program** (1942–1964). Under this program, created by the U.S government to meet labor shortages caused by World War II, 4.6 million Mexicans, called *braceros* (a Spanish term that can be roughly translated as "farmhands"), came to work in agriculture in the United States. Mexicans also continued to immigrate to the United States illegally because not all workers qualified for the bracero program and the costs associated with immigrating as a bracero were prohibitive to some.

The United States carried out mass deportations of Mexicans twice during this period, first in the 1930s and again in the 1950s, when the bracero program was in full swing. The United States deported 1,751 Mexicans in 1925, but this number increased dramatically to 15,000 in 1929, when the U.S. stock market crash triggered the onset of the Great Depression. Subsequently, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, in cooperation with local officials, mounted a repatriation campaign, under which over 400,000 people of Mexican origin were returned to Mexico (Ngai 2004). In the 1950s, the U.S. Border Patrol deported over a million Mexican immigrants under Operation Wetback.

Operation Wetback

World War II created a Mexican American middle class, and during this time Mexicans were also accorded an improved social standing in the borderlands. By the late 1940s, "No Mexicans Allowed" signs had disappeared, and high schools were increasingly integrated. At the same time, the Border Patrol became more firmly entrenched as part of the federal government, meaning that its policies often reflected Washington's interests more than local interests along the border. This shift created tensions, as ranchers and farmers in Texas wanted to employ undocumented Mexicans, whereas it was the duty of Border Patrol agents to stop immigrants from crossing over (Hernandez 2010).

In 1950, the Border Patrol began massive roundups of Mexicans in a series of operations that would come to be known as **Operation Wetback**. One example of an Operation Wetback raid happened on July 30, 1952. At dawn, about 100 Border Patrol agents began to arrest Mexicans by the hundreds in an area near Brownsville, Texas. By the end of the day, they had made 5,000 arrests and had transported all of those people to the bridge that led back to Mexico. These sorts of roundups continued through 1954. In October 1954, the Border Patrol announced it had deported more than one million Mexican immigrants. These mass arrests created fear and

tension in immigrant communities, as Mexicans were forced to leave their loved ones, their belongings, and their lives in the United States and return to Mexico (Hernandez 2010).

The McCarran Internal Security Act

Mexicans were not the only target of nativism during this period; at the same time, the United States was gripped by a pervasive fear of Communism, which was portrayed as a product of foreign influence. The **McCarran Internal Security Act**, signed into law in 1950, was designed to combat Communism, both outside and within the borders of the United States. Anyone in the United States who was affiliated with the Communist Party was required to register with the federal government. In addition, this act allowed for the deportation of foreign nationals who were members of the Communist Party. Between 1946 and 1966, deportation proceedings were initiated against 15,000 foreign nationals on ideological grounds (primarily because they were Communists or suspected Communists). Of the 15,000 people put into deportation proceedings, 253 were deported. Deportation for ideological reasons remained legal until the Immigration Act of 1990 repealed these provisions (Török 2004).

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act and the Changing Face of Immigration

One of the most significant changes to U.S. immigration law in the twentieth century was the **1965 Immigration and Nationality Act**, also called the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act. This act put an end to the racially biased quotas set forth in the 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act and the Immigration Act of 1924. In the spirit of the civil rights movement, the 1965 act set a universal quota of 20,000 immigrants for every country in the world. Each country could send up to 20,000 qualified immigrants a year, with no racial restrictions. Potential immigrants could now qualify for entry based on either family ties to the United States (relatives could petition for their entry) or their skills (employers could request immigrants based on their skills and education). The 1965 act had two main consequences: (1) it increased immigration from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean; and (2) it increased undocumented immigration from Mexico.

Asian Immigration

Historically, immigrants from India, China, Japan, the Philippines, and Korea had come to the United States to work as laborers. However, the longstanding prohibitions on Asian immigration between 1882 and 1965 greatly decreased Asian immigration. The 1965 act opened up the possibility of immigration from Asia by removing racial quotas, and large numbers of Asians began to migrate to the United States once again.

Between 1820 and 1849, only 210 people came to the United States from Asia as legal permanent residents. In the 1850s, 36,080 people from Asia became legal permanent residents. Asian immigration peaked in the first decade of the twentieth century, with nearly 300,000 people from Asia becoming legal permanent residents. After the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act, this number dropped off, and only 19,231 Asians gained legal permanent residency in the 1930s. Asian immigration again increased in the 1950s to 135,000 and then increased exponentially to nearly 1.5 million in the 1970s, 2.4 million in the 1980s, and 2.9 million in the 1990s (see Figure 13-3). In the first decade of the twentieth century, almost 3.5 million Asians became legal permanent residents. The most prominent countries of origin of Asian immigrants today are China, the Philippines, India, Korea, and Vietnam—each with its own history of immigration to the United States. By 2015, Asia was the largest sending region for legal permanent residents. In that year, 419,297 Asians (40 percent of the total) became legal permanent residents of the United States (Baugh and Wistman 2017). More recently, the number of new legal permanent residents from Asia has declined to 35% of the total and that from the Americas edged up to 45% of the total. The other 20% of new legal permanent residents nearly all came from Africa (11%) or Europe (8.5%). (Baugh 2020).

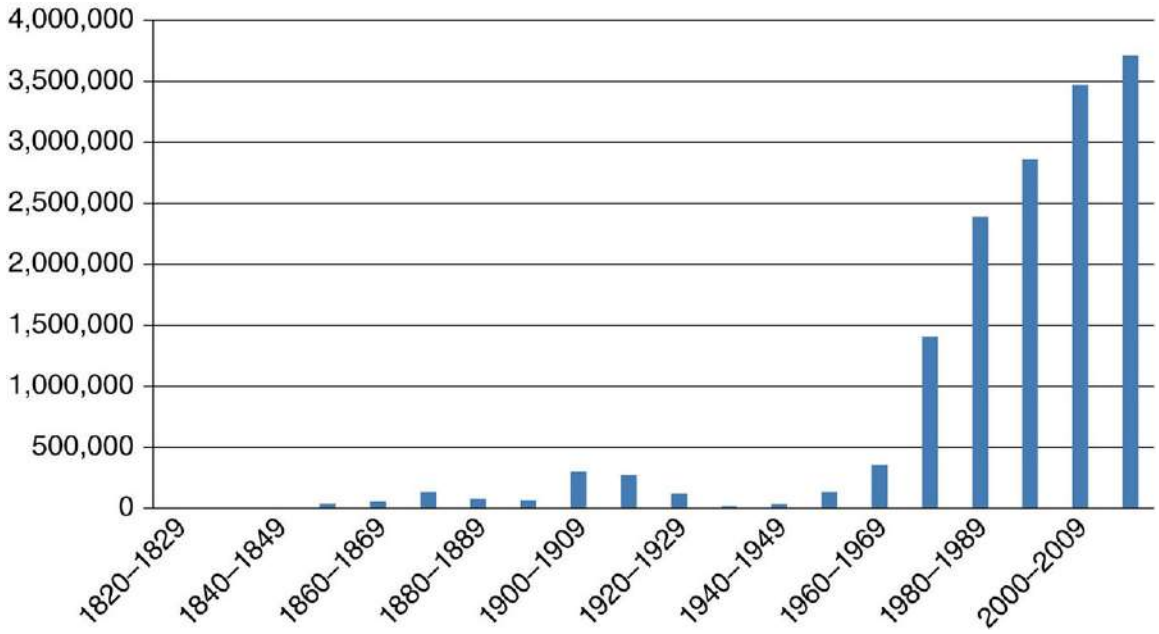


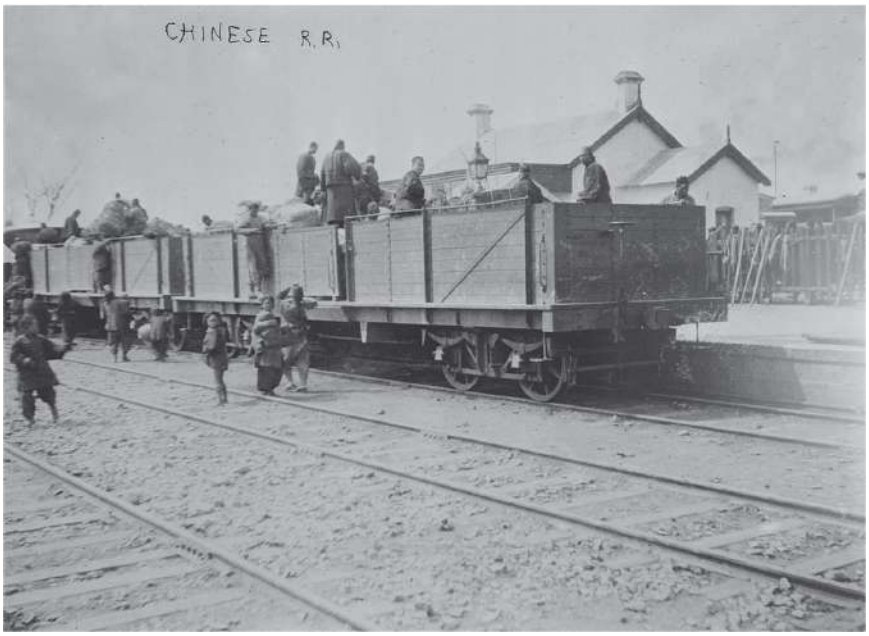
FIGURE 13-3 Number of Asians to Attain Legal U.S. Permanent Resident Status, by Decade Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics.

Immigration from Asia increased dramatically with the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. Asians did not come from every country in the region, but specifically from countries with which the United States had longstanding ties. In fact, with the exception of Vietnam, those Asian countries that send large numbers of immigrant to the United States today are the same countries that sent substantial numbers of immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These immigration patterns can be directly linked to both family ties and high skills provisions in the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act.

Chinese Immigration

Chinese immigrants to the United States predate many other immigrant groups; the large-scale migration of Chinese to the United States began when U.S. contractors recruited laborers to build railroads in the mid-nineteenth century. Around the same time, recruiters in Hawaii (which would not become a U.S. state until 1959) brought tens of thousands of Chinese to work in agriculture and other industries. Chinese immigration peaked in the 1870s, with 133,000 Chinese becoming legal permanent residents of the United States. Following the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, however, immigration dropped off dramatically and did not begin to rise again until decades after the act was repealed in 1943.

Following the 1943 repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese immigration to the United States slowly began to pick up again. The presence of Chinese immigrants and their descendants in the United States facilitated future waves of immigration. In the 1980s, 171,000 Chinese immigrated to the United States. Chinese immigration increased in the next decade to 342,000 and to 592,000 in the first decade of the twenty-first century.



Chinese immigrant laborers working on the railroad, *c*. 1910.

Filipino Immigration

The United States has a longstanding relationship with the Philippines, as well as a protracted migration history. This helps explain why this relatively small (with a population of 111 million, compared to China and India's billion-plus people) and quite distant country sends large numbers of its nationals to the United States. The Philippines was a U.S. colony from 1898 until 1946. From 1898 to 1934, Filipinos were American nationals and could freely come to the United States. Many were recruited as laborers by Hawaiian sugar plantations, and by 1931, around 113,000 had migrated to Hawaii alone. Manufacturers and vineyard owners in California also recruited Filipinos as workers, attracting over 5,000 to the mainland by 1920. With the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act, which ended the flow of Japanese laborers, agribusiness turned to Mexican and Filipino labor, such that by 1930, there were 56,000 Filipinos on the West Coast. As the numbers of Filipinos began to increase in the 1920s, White people increasingly began to see Filipinos as a problem and a threat. In 1929, the California legislature asked Congress to restrict Filipino immigration. Congress eventually responded by passing the Tydings-McDuffe Act in 1934, which limited Filipino immigration to an annual quota of50—the smallest of any country. The onset of World War II and racial violence on the West Coast also contributed to slowing Filipino immigration. Between 1946 and 1965, 33,000 Filipinos immigrated to the United States, nearly half of whom were wives of U.S. servicemen (Liu, Ong, and Rosenstein 1991; White, Biddlecom, and Guo 1993; Ngai 2004).

As with other countries, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act changed immigration patterns from the Philippines to the United States. Between 1965 and 1985, about 667,000 Filipinos obtained visas to come to the United States. These Filipino migrants consisted of two groups of people. The first group, which constituted about two-thirds of Filipino immigrants, came on family reunification visas from the networks of the pre-1965 migrants. The second included migrants who obtained employment visas, mostly as professionals and other highly trained individuals (Liu, Ong, and Rosenstein 1991). In 2019, 4 percent of all new legal permanent residents were from the Philippines, making it the fifth-largest sending country (Baugh 2020).

Indian Immigration

India is another country that sent large numbers of immigrants to the United States prior to passage of the Johnson-Reed Act. As with other Asian countries, immigration from India resumed after 1965. Between 1966

and 1981, 215,640 Asian Indians came to the United States. This rate of 14,376 immigrants per year is twenty times higher than the rate at the previous peak in the period just before World War I. The majority of these new immigrants were professionals, with less than 1 percent working in farm labor occupations (Gonzales 1986). In 2019, India was the third-largest sending country for legal permanent residents, as 54,495 Indians became legal permanent residents that year (Baugh 2020).

Korean Immigration

The pattern is similar for Korea. Over 7,000 Koreans migrated to Hawaii to work on sugar plantations between 1903 and 1905. Korean migration was cut off, first as a result of restrictions placed on emigration by the Japanese imperial power and later by the 1924 restrictions. These restrictions were lifted in the aftermath of the Korean War (1950–1953), and more than 3,000 Koreans were admitted between 1950 and 1965, the vast majority of whom were wives of U.S. servicemen stationed in Korea. With passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, Koreans quickly became one of the largest immigrant groups in the United States. In 1965, 2,165 Koreans entered the United States. In 1970, 9,314 came. And in 1977, 30,917 entered (Reimers 1981; Min 1990). Between 1975 and 1990, Korea sent more immigrants to the United States than any other country, with the exception of Mexico and the Philippines. Korean immigrants were relatively highly educated, and 30 percent in the 1970s came on skills-based visas. The remaining 70 percent came on family reunification visas (Min 1990). In 2019, 18,479 South Koreans became legal permanent residents, making them 12th on the list of new legal permanent residents that year (Baugh 2020).

Vietnamese Immigration

Vietnam is distinct from the other Asian countries in that there were almost no Vietnamese in the United States in the early twentieth century, or even prior to the Vietnam War. Today, however, there are over one million Vietnamese in the United States. The first wave came as refugees; between 1971 and 1980, 150,000 Vietnamese were admitted to the United States (White, Biddlecom, and Guo 1993). The reunification provisions of the 1965 act led to the growth of the Vietnamese population in the United States well after the Vietnam War ended (Kelly 1986). Those Vietnamese who were in the United States already had the right to bring their family members to the country under the family reunification provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Legal immigration through family reunification policies, combined with illegal immigration, led to the continued growth of the Vietnamese population. The 2000 census reported the presence of over one million Vietnamese, nearly a quarter of whom had been born in the United States (Hoefer, Rytina, and Campbell 2007). In 2010, three other countries in Asia had larger populations of legal permanent residents in the United States: the Philippines (560,000), China (550,000), and India (500,000) (Rytina 2011). In 2019, Vietnam came in at number six in the list of the top twenty countries sending legal permanent residents to the United States, with 39,712 new Vietnamese legal permanent residents in t

Figure 13-4 shows the distribution of the population of undocumented immigrants in the United States in 2017: 47 percent of undocumented migrants in the United States came from Mexico, 18 percent from Central America, and 14 percent from Asia.

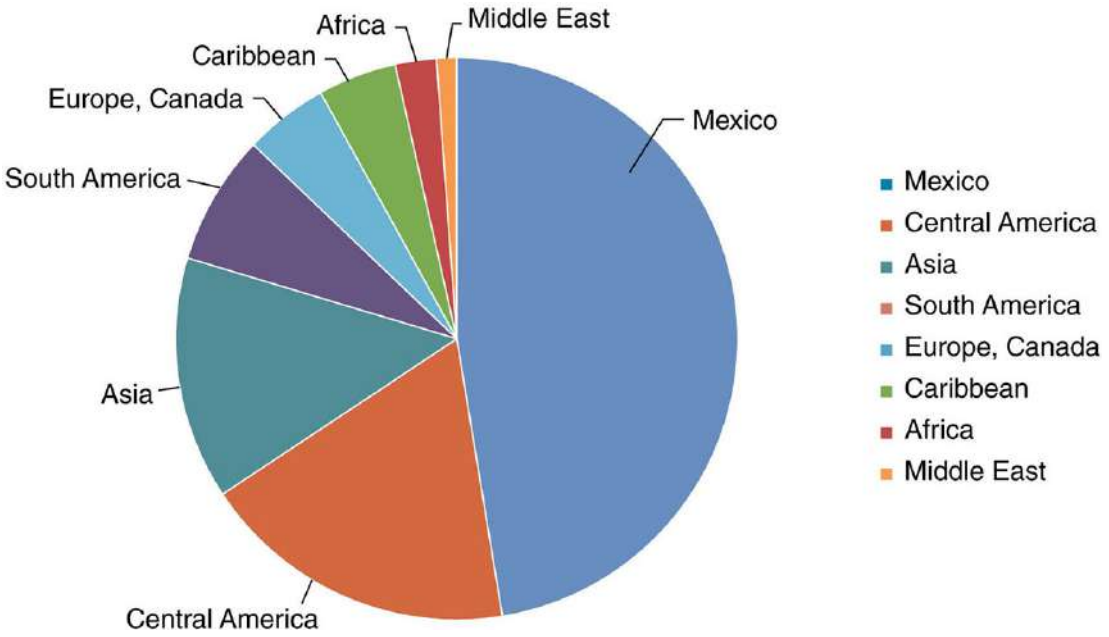


FIGURE 13-4 Region of Birth of Undocumented Immigrants Residing in the United States, 2017 Source: Passel and Cohn (2019).

Latin American and Caribbean Immigration

There were very few immigrants from Latin America or the Caribbean in the United States prior to the twentieth century, and those who did come were mostly from Mexico. Latin American migration increased dramatically in the 1990s, when five million Latin Americans became legal permanent residents (Golash-Boza 2015). This surge was largely due to a piece of legislation called the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which permitted the legalization of millions of immigrants. Figure 13-5 shows the number of people from the Americas who have obtained legal permanent resident status since 1820. Since the turn of the century, the number of new legal permanent residents from the Americas has decreased.

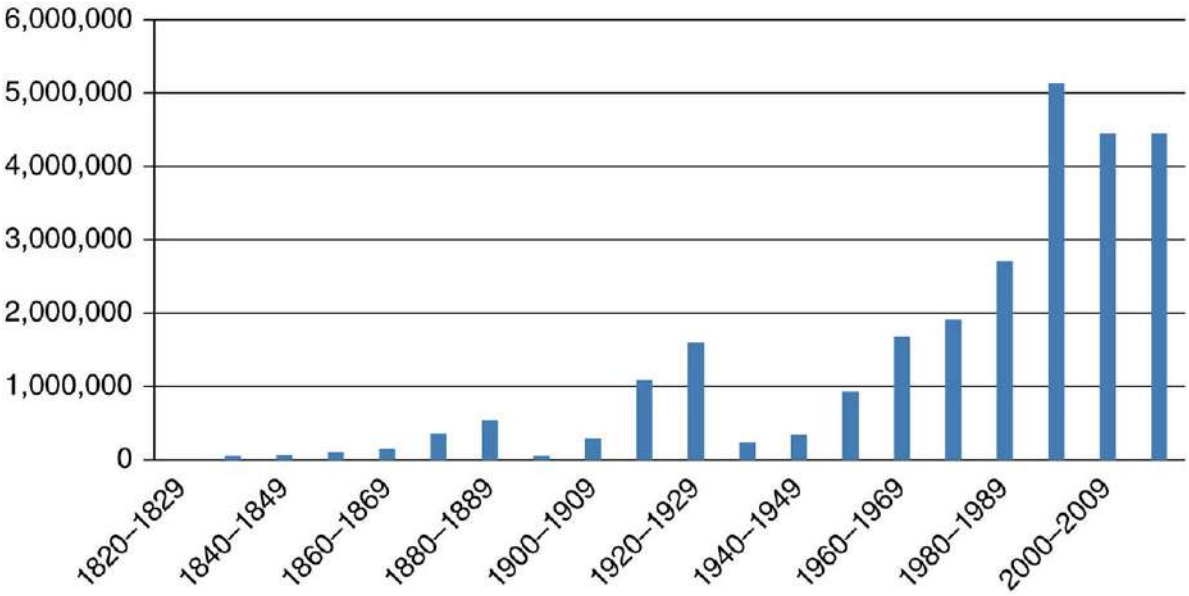


FIGURE 13-5 Persons from the Americas Attaining Legal Permanent Resident Status, 1820–2009 Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics (2015).

Latin American Immigration

Latin American migrants account for a substantial proportion of immigrants to the United States. In 2019, one million people became legal permanent residents of the United States and 45 percent of them came from the Americas (Baugh 2020). Of the Latin American countries, Mexico has the longest and most sustained history of migration.

Up until the 1970s, over 80 percent of Mexicans who came to the United States were temporary farm workers. By 1997, only 40 percent of Mexicans could be described as such (Massey et al. 2002). With passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act and the subsequent 1986 mass legalization laws, increasing numbers of Mexicans have chosen to reside permanently in the United States.

Central Americans have been coming to the United States since the late nineteenth century, but they did not begin to arrive in large numbers until the 1960s, with passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. Around 8,000 Central Americans entered the United States legally between 1900 and 1910; this number increased to 17,000 in the next decade, around 6,000 in the 1930s, 21,000 in the 1940s, and about 45,000 in the 1950s. In the 1960s, the presence of U.S. companies in Central America increased, with a concomitant increase in the presence of Central Americans in the United States. Between 1971 and 1980, more than 130,000 Central Americans legally entered the United States (Hamilton and Chinchilla 1991).

In the 1980s, immigration to the United States from El Salvador and other Central American countries increased rapidly as a result of both political violence in Central America and the economic setbacks that this violence entailed (Hamilton and Chinchilla 1991). In neighboring Nicaragua, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency financed and organized a counterrevolution against the Sandinista government. In El Salvador, the U.S. government supplied military equipment to the government in the 1980s, which was used to kill thousands of civilians (Hamilton and Chinchilla 1991). As part of its Cold War strategy, the U.S. government also supplied the Salvadoran government with more than $6 billion in military and economic aid between 1980 and 1992 (Quan 2005). The civil war in El Salvador caused massive population displacements, and many of those displaced came to the United States. While the conditions in El Salvador were the motivation for leaving, the nation's longstanding ties to the United States turned the latter country into a preferred destination when Salvadorans began to seek refuge (Menjívar 2000).

Caribbean Immigration

Immigrants have been coming to the United States from the Caribbean as long as the nation has been keeping records. Between 1820 and 1900, nearly 90,000 people from the Caribbean came to the United States. Immigration from this region first reached a peak in the first three decades of the twentieth century, when 300,000 people from the Caribbean became legal permanent residents. In the last three decades of the twentieth century, 2.5 million people from the Caribbean became legal permanent residents of the United States. Another million migrated legally in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Golash-Boza 2012). Since the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, large numbers of immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Jamaica have entered the country.

The United States has been heavily involved in the affairs of the Dominican Republic and has been the destination of many immigrants as a consequence of this close relationship. Between 1961 and 1968, for example, the United States was closely entangled in the Dominican Republic's presidential elections, to the point of ensuring that the democratically elected left-wing president Juan Bosch was ousted in 1965. This time of intense involvement in the Dominican Republic coincided with the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which paved the way for Dominicans to enter the United States. During this time, more people from the Dominican Republic entered the United States than from any other country in the Western Hemisphere except Mexico. Emigration from the Dominican Republic has continued to rise. By 1980, there were 169,000 Dominican immigrants in the United States. By 1990, there were 348,000, and by 2012, there were nearly a million (Garrison and Weiss 1979; Hernández 2004; Nwosu and Batalova 2014).

Following the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, more people from the Dominican Republic entered the United States than from any other country in the Western Hemisphere except Mexico.

Cuba is another Caribbean country that has had a longstanding relationship with the United States. In the early twentieth century, more than 20,000 Cubans lived in the United States, and by the end of the 1950s, that number was about 50,000. This population continued to increase following the 1959 victory of Fidel Castro in the Cuban Revolution. By the end of the 1980s, there were nearly one million Cubans in the United States (Perez 2003). The exiles who came in the early 1960s came because of a long history of U.S. military interventions into Cuba, with the expectation that the U.S. government would assist in ousting Castro's government. Those migrants who come today come more often for economic than political motives, and because of ties they have in the United States, in the context of an immigration policy that has been generally favorable toward Cubans. President Lyndon B. Johnson established an "open door" policy that encouraged Cuban emigration. In the mid-1990s, President Bill Clinton changed that policy to a "wet foot, dry foot" policy that repatriated Cubans found at sea but allowed those who reached land to stay. In his last days in office in January 2017, President Obama ended this policy, thereby ending Cuban migrants' special treatment (Eckstein and Barberia 2002; Perez 2003; Pew Hispanic Center 2006).

Relatively few Jamaicans came to the United States prior to 1965, in part because Jamaicans were primarily emigrating elsewhere: to Central America, other islands, and Great Britain. However, just as Great Britain passed a series of restrictive immigration laws in the 1960s, the United States passed the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which facilitated the increased immigration of Jamaicans on skills- and family-based visas. By 2009, there were about 637,000 Jamaican migrants in the United States (Glennie and Chappell 2010). Nearly half of Jamaicans in the United States live in New York City, and another 28 percent live in southern Florida. There are also significant populations in Connecticut, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and Atlanta (Vickerman 1999). Notably, over half of Jamaican migrants to the United States are women (Glennie and Chappell 2010).

Migrants to the United States from Puerto Rico are not technically immigrants, as Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens. Nevertheless, Puerto Ricans share a similar migration history with other Caribbean countries, in terms of its relationship to the U.S. mainland. Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the United States in 1898, and the island became a U.S. territory. In 1917, Puerto Ricans became citizens of the United States. Shortly thereafter, employers in the United States began to recruit Puerto Ricans to work in the mainland United States due to labor shortages caused by World War I. The recruitment of Puerto Ricans—and thus the migration—intensified in the aftermath of World War II when labor shortages in the mainland United States were even more severe. Just as Mexicans filled key labor needs in the western and southwestern United States during this time, Puerto

Ricans were the primary source of migrant labor in the northeastern United States in the aftermath of World War II. The post–World War II period of massive migration of Puerto Ricans to the northeastern United States is often referred to as the "Great Migration" owing to the large numbers of Puerto Ricans who left the island. This migration tapered off in the late 1960s and 1970s, as migrants from other Caribbean countries were able to more easily migrate to the United States following the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act (Portes and Grosfoguel 1994). There has been a resurgence of migration from Puerto Rico to the mainland United States in recent years, related to a protracted economic crisis on the island. Between 2010 and 2013, an average of 48,000 Puerto Ricans left the island each year, which is over three times the average number that left each year in the 1980s and 1990s. By 2012, about 1.4 million Puerto Ricans were living on the mainland (Cohn, Patten, and Lopez 2014).

SELF-ASSESSMENT 13.1: The Racialized History of U.S. Immigration Policy

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Illegal Immigration and Policy Response

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act instituted quotas of 20,000 immigrants per country. At first glance, this blanket quota may seem fair. However, most of the 180-plus countries in the world do not send 20,000 immigrants per year to the United States, and a handful of countries send many more. Mexico is a case in point. Prior to 1965, there were no limits on the number of immigrants who could be admitted from Mexico, and tens of thousands of Mexicans came to the United States each year. The 1965 act initially established a ceiling of 120,000 immigrant visas for the entire Western Hemisphere. In 1976, the law came fully into effect, and a quota of 20,000 immigrants per year was extended to all countries in the Western Hemisphere, including Mexico (Joppke 1998). However, the imposition of a quota did not end large-scale migration from Mexico because, in the 1970s, many employers depended on Mexican labor to thrive, and many Mexicans desired to work in the United States.

The imbalance between the number of Mexicans allowed to enter the United States legally and the need for Mexican labor to sustain economic growth in the United States led to increased undocumented immigration, which was relatively easy at the time because there were hardly any Border Patrol agents (Massey et al. 2002). In the 1970s, undocumented immigration reached unprecedented levels and became a matter of public debate for the first time. During the 1980s, public opposition to undocumented immigration grew, and politicians began to get tough on immigration. Eventually, another major legislative change took place in 1986.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) and Nativism

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is hard to imagine that there was ever a time when illegal immigration was not seen as a problem. Remarkably, this issue did not figure on the national agenda until the 1980s, when the tightening economy, combined with the arrival of increasing numbers of Latin Americans, generated waves of nativism and anti-immigrant sentiment. The concern over large numbers of undocumented migrants often had a racial tenor: the debates made it clear that the "problem" with immigration was the high and increasing numbers of Mexicans in the United States (Inda 2006).

The debates leading up to passage of the 1986 **Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA)** invoked racialized sentiments about Mexicans taking jobs from Americans, overusing welfare, and refusing to assimilate, despite evidence to the contrary. As Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) argues, the debates surrounding IRCA were not so much about the presence of Mexicans as about the reality that increasing numbers of Mexicans were settling in the United States. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) contends that the nativism pervading the debates over IRCA focused on three claims: (1) allegations that immigrants were stealing jobs from Americans, (2) concerns that immigrants were overusing the welfare system, and (3) worries that the newcomers were too different and "unassimilable." By the end of the twentieth century, immigration restrictionists were no longer concerned about the inability of southern and eastern Europeans to assimilate. Now, the target was Mexicans.

The passage of IRCA involved a series of compromises and constituted the last mass legalization of the twentieth century. As the name implies, IRCA included immigration reform and control provisions. The twin prongs of IRCA were (1) to offer a legalization option for people who lived in the United States but did not have the proper authorization to work in the country and (2) to impose sanctions on employers who hired people

not authorized to work in the United States. The imposition of sanctions was meant to deter employers from hiring undocumented workers. Instead, these sanctions ultimately created an industry that produced fraudulent documentation, making it easy for anyone to obtain the (false) documents they needed to work (Fragomen and Bell 2007).

One of the major consequences of IRCA was to encourage the permanent settlement of Mexican immigrants, who had formerly come primarily as temporary workers. Until the 1970s, over 80 percent of Mexican immigrants were temporary workers who came to the United States to work in the agricultural sector for a few months and then returned to Mexico with their savings. By 1997, only 40 percent of Mexican migration was for temporary work in the agricultural sector (Avila, Fuentes, and Tuirán 2000). The legalization of temporary workers encouraged more migrants to settle permanently in the United States and to bring their families with them (Massey et al. 2002). Once migrants obtained legal residence or citizenship, they were able to bring over family members under family reunification provisions. As increasing numbers of Mexicans settled permanently in the United States, racialized fears of immigrants intensified.

Proposition 187 and the Lead-Up to IIRIRA

Fear of immigrants often has racial undertones. The vast majority of immigrants to the United States are people of color (Figure 13-6). According to Office of Immigration Statistics data, in 2019, one million people became legal permanent residents. Just over 10 percent were from primarily White countries (Baugh 2020). Thus, any discourse about immigration today has the subtext of minority incorporation into society (Johnson 2004). The racialization of immigrants, and especially of undocumented immigrants, became clear in the campaign to push

forward Proposition 187 in California, a ballot initiative that would deny social services and educational opportunities to the undocumented.

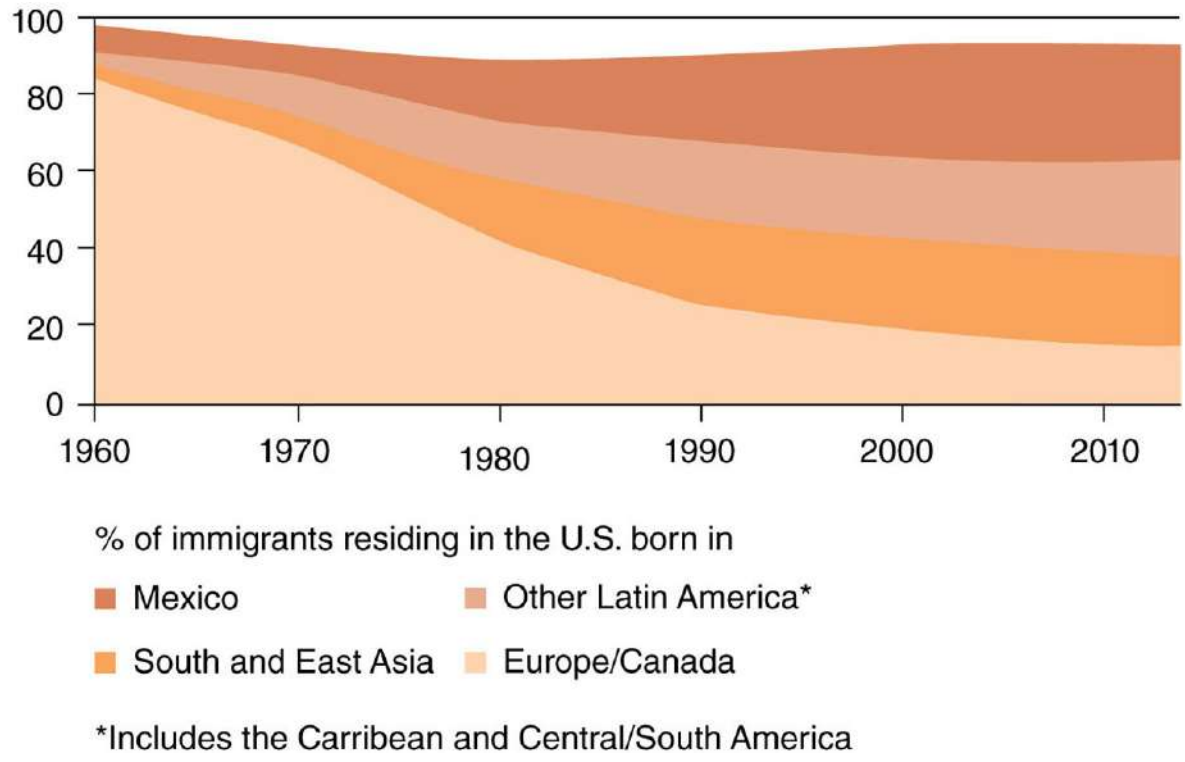


FIGURE 13-6 U.S. Immigrant Population by Origin Source: Migration Policy Institute (2016).

When Proposition 187 was being debated in the early 1990s, California was on the verge of becoming a majority–minority state, and demographic changes were at the center of the fears expressed by Proposition 187 supporters. For example, in Robin Dale Jacobson's interviews with supporters, one of her respondents told her that the proposition was a response to the "Mexican impact on the state of California." Another interviewee was more forthright: "So, I just wanted something to be done about too many Mexican people all of a sudden" (Jacobson 2008, 39). These fears about the increase in the Mexican population were exacerbated by the conflation of Mexicans with "illegals" and "criminals." Supporters of the proposition often took the fact that undocumented migrants had crossed the border illegally or overstayed their visas to indicate that they were prone to criminal activity more

generally. Governor Pete Wilson fanned the flames of this fire by "widely publicizing the estimated costs of keeping illegal aliens in prison" (Jacobson 2008, 55). In addition to criminalizing undocumented immigrants, much of the discourse surrounding Proposition 187 racialized undocumented immigrants as Mexican. Thus, many of its supporters interpreted the "invasion" of undocumented workers as a racial takeover of California (Jacobson 2008, 117).

The political campaigns that promoted the passage of Proposition 187 drew on racial imagery. Television ads supported by Governor Wilson "showed shadowy Mexicans crossing the border in large numbers" (Johnson 2004, 43). Kevin Johnson (2004) argues that the Proposition 187 campaign was a clear manifestation of the racial fears of White Californians. While it would have been politically unsavory to launch an overtly racist attack on people of color, targeting undocumented immigrants without mentioning race directly was permissible.

In the context of an economic downturn, job losses, and state cutbacks in social services, many Californians found undocumented immigrants to be appropriate scapegoats for their economic troubles, and in 1994, Proposition 187 was passed (Alvarez and Butterfield 2000). Although there was no clear connection between the presence of a large undocumented population and the hard economic times, gubernatorial and state legislature candidates in California were able to use the presence of undocumented people to their advantage by advocating for harsh policies that were not guaranteed to improve the fiscal health of the state. Politicians used undocumented immigrants as scapegoats by blaming them for the poor economic conditions, and their promises to get tough on illegal immigration helped them win elections. In California, 60 percent of voters voted in favor of Proposition 187. The bill was not implemented, however, as it was found to be unconstitutional in 1997 (Diamond 1996).

In 1996, members of an anti-immigration group in California protest immigration from Mexico into the United States.

Although Proposition 187 was found to be unconstitutional, the debates surrounding it set the stage for passage of three laws in 1996 that negatively affected immigrants: the **Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA)**, the **Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA)**, and the **Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)**.

The PRWORA was designed to "end welfare as we know it." It also had nativist provisions that denied services to noncitizens. Contrary to popular belief, undocumented migrants have never been eligible for welfare services such as cash benefits, Medicaid, food stamps, or public housing. The root of the myth that undocumented migrants benefit from

need-based programs such as food stamps is that their U.S.-citizen children are eligible for the same set of benefits as any other U.S. citizen. When PRWORA was passed, it extended the limitations on welfare benefits to legally present immigrants. Touted as a money-saving measure, PRWORA denied most benefits to legally present migrants, at least for the first five years of their stay in the United States (Tumlin and Zimmerman, 2003). Before we turn to the other two laws passed in 1996, let's briefly consider the composition of the immigrant population. An immigrant is any person living in the United States who was born in another country. In 2017, of the 45.6 million people living in the United States who were born abroad, 45 percent were citizens, 27 percent were legal permanent residents, and 23 percent were undocumented migrants (Passel and Cohn 2019). Immigrants are often juxtaposed against citizens in popular discourse, yet nearly half of all immigrants are indeed citizens. The legal permanent resident category is often ignored in conversations about immigrants, yet these 12.3 million people were deeply affected by the laws passed in 1996.

The 1996 Laws and the Detention and Deportation of Black and Latinx Immigrants

In 1996, Congress passed two laws that fundamentally changed the rights of all foreign-born people in the United States: the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA). These laws were striking in that they eliminated judicial review of some deportation orders, required mandatory detention for many noncitizens, and introduced the potential for the use of secret evidence in certain cases. Some of the most pernicious consequences of these laws are related to the deportation of legal permanent residents, commonly referred to as "green card holders."

Under IIRIRA, legal permanent residents like Robert Bautista (whose story was featured in the Voices sidebar on p. 376) face mandatory deportation if they are convicted of "aggravated felonies." These include crimes for which a person is sentenced to at least one year in prison, regardless of whether the sentence is served or suspended. These crimes can also be relatively minor, such as the theft of baby clothes from a department store or two counts of minor drug possession. These cases do not require judicial review—that is, people do not have the right to have a judge hear the specifics of the case or consider the ties that a person has to the United States. Furthermore, the law can be applied retroactively. This means that any legal permanent resident charged with a crime at any time during his or her stay in the United States could be subject to deportation. For example, a person could have come to the United States legally at age two, been convicted of resisting arrest at age eighteen, and—twenty years later, after the passage of IIRIRA—be subject to deportation at age thirty-eight. Even adopted children of U.S. citizens have faced deportation under these laws, specifically in those cases in which parents failed to naturalize their children prior to age eighteen (Morawetz 2000; Master 2003). In light of the heavy policing of Black and Latinx neighborhoods, and of Black and Latinx youth in particular, immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean are more likely to face deportation because of these laws.

Immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean are more likely to face deportation because of AEDPA and IIRIRA laws.

The 1996 laws are punitive and harsh. Moreover, they have disproportionately affected Black and Latinx people. Johnson (2004) argues that since the vast majority of immigrants who come to the United States each year are people of color, the differential treatment of noncitizens in U.S. legal practices amounts to racial discrimination. Joe Feagin (2001, 31) defines systemic racism as "a diverse assortment of racist practices; the unjustly gained economic and political power of White people; the continuing resource inequalities; and the white-racist ideologies and attitudes created to preserve White advantage and power." He further contends that "one can accurately describe the United States as a 'total racist society' in which every major aspect of life is shaped to some degree by the core racist realities." The system of deportation and detention of immigrants is no exception: it is clearly shaped by the "core racist realities" of the United States.

As described in Chapter Eleven, the criminal justice system systematically disadvantages Black and Latinx men. Even though Black and White men have similar levels of criminal activity, Black men are seven times more likely than White men to be imprisoned, and Latinos are four times as likely (Feagin 2000; P. H. Collins 2004; Western 2006). In the case of drug offenses, the data are particularly striking. In the United States, Black men are sent to prison on drug charges at thirteen times the rate of White men, yet five times as many White people use illegal drugs as Black people (Alexander 2010). Although White people use drugs more frequently than Black people, Black people are much more likely to end up incarcerated. These data are important for understanding deportations, as about a third of all deportees are deported for drug charges, and most deportees are men (Golash-Boza 2015).

VOICES

Hector, a Guatemalan Deportee

Hector moved to the United States with his mother when he was three years old, in 1984. They joined his father, who had been there since he was a newborn. In 1990, his parents applied for political asylum, as Hector's mother had worked for the Guatemalan government and could be subject to persecution if they returned. They were issued work permits and waited for their cases to be heard. In 1999, Hector and his family were able to legalize under the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA). Hector became a legal permanent resident of the United States.

Hector spent most of his childhood in the San Fernando Valley, where he completed elementary, middle, and high school. He did well in high school and attended the University of California. After he finished college in 2004, his first job was on campus as a coordinator for a smoking prevention and cessation program.

While working on campus, Hector also began to work part time at a computer company. When the grant funding his university job ran out, he switched over to full-time work at the computer company. There, he quickly moved up from entry- to mid-level management. Things were going well for him. He was earning good money at the company and was promoted several times.

Hector frequently traveled back to the San Fernando Valley to visit his parents and old friends. It was there he reconnected with some people who encouraged him to join them in a credit card fraud scheme. Hector and his friends were caught forging credit cards, and he was sentenced to eighteen months in prison. After finishing his time, Hector faced automatic deportation to Guatemala.

At Hector's deportation hearing, it did not matter that he had come to the United States when he was three years old, that he was a legal permanent resident, that he had a college degree, and that he had no immediate family in Guatemala. The only consideration

the judge could take into account was the fact that he had been convicted of an aggravated felony. Hector was deported to Guatemala, where he had to remake his life from the ground up.

Source: Golash-Boza 2012.

Chapter 13.2 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Racism in the criminal justice system has severe implications for Black and Latinx immigrants. Many Jamaicans, Dominicans, and Haitians experience the same set of resource deprivations and racist ideologies and practices that have led to the mass incarceration of Black men. Immigrants from Latin America often live in Latinx neighborhoods that are heavily policed. Thus, immigrants of African and Latin American descent are more likely to be jailed and eventually deported than immigrants of European or Asian descent who are not subject to the same set of prejudices and discriminatory actions. Whereas the immigrant population includes many White and Asian people, Black and Latinx people almost exclusively make up the group of detainees and deportees. Black and Brown people from Latin America and the Caribbean are substantially more likely to be deported than are White or Asian people; 98 percent of deportees are sent to the Americas (see Table 13-1).

TABLE 13-1 Top Ten Countries to Which Deportees Were Sent, 2014

	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mexico	275,911	66.57%	66.57%
Guatemala	54,153	13.07%	79.63%
Honduras	40,560	9.79%	89.42%

	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
El Salvador	26,685	6.44%	95.86%
Dominican Republic	2,045	0.49%	96.35%
Ecuador	1,511	0.36%	96.71%
Colombia	1,309	0.32%	97.03%
Nicaragua	1,284	0.31%	97.34%
Jamaica	1,027	0.25%	97.59%
Brazil	931	0.22%	97.81%
Others	9,065	2.19%	100.00%

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2016.

Earlier in this chapter, we looked at the five countries of origin from which most legal permanent residents in the United States come: China, India, Mexico, the Philippines, and Vietnam. With the notable exception of Mexico, these are not the countries to which we send most deportees. The top five countries of origin of deportees in 2014 were Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic. These five countries alone accounted for over 96 percent of all people deported in 2014. Table 13-1 lists the top ten countries to which deportees were sent in 2014. These ten countries represent 97.81 percent of people deported in 2014. These data call attention to a glaring fact: Asians are prominent among immigrants overall, whereas Latin Americans and Caribbean nationals are overrepresented among deportees. At this point, it will be useful to take a closer look at the numbers. As Figure 13-7 shows, even when we take into account the relative numbers of undocumented migrants in the country, Latin Americans are still much more likely to be deported than Asians.

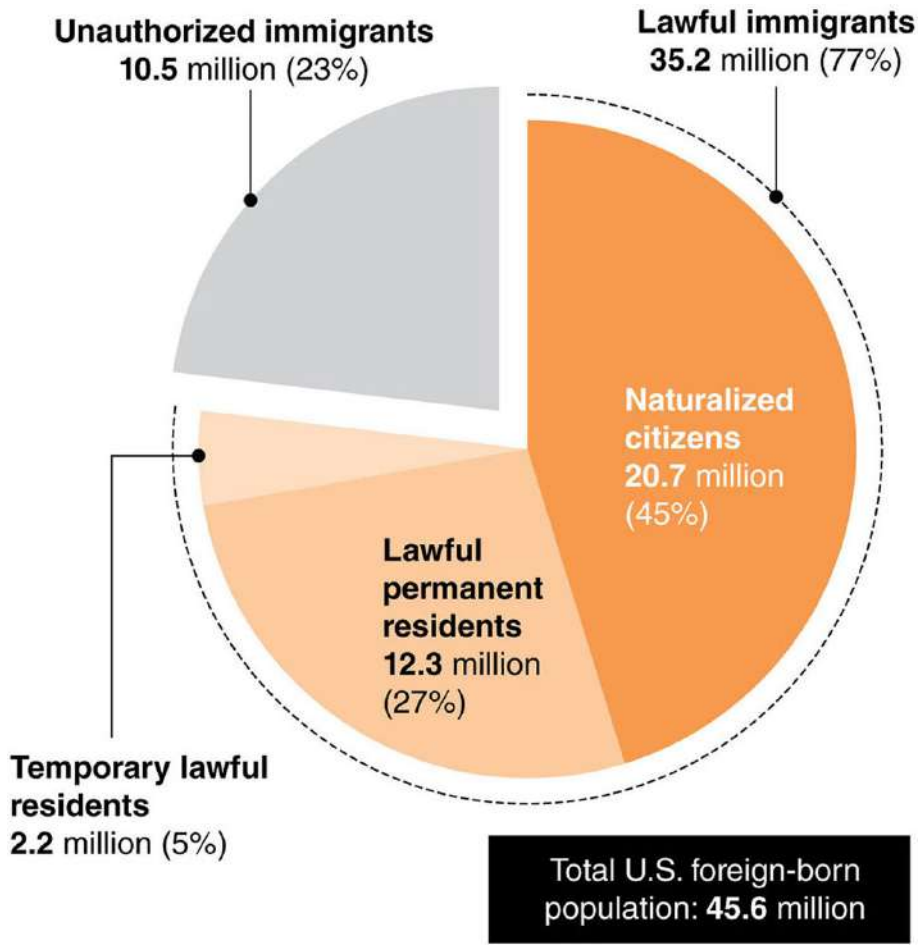


FIGURE 13-7 U.S Foreign-Born Population Estimates, 2017 Source: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/12/us-unauthorized-immigrant-population-2017/

Deportations peaked in 2014, when 405,090 migrants were removed from the United States. Deportations then decreased for three years, reaching a low of 287,093 in 2017, when they began to increase again. In 2019, there were 359,885 deportations. The patterns, nevertheless, were consistent, with 97% of deportees in 2019 going to the Americas.

Deportation policy also has gendered effects. About 90 percent of all deportees are men, even though about half of all immigrants are men (Golash-Boza 2015). This disparity is due to the way criminal and immigration laws are enforced. Men are more likely than women to be in public places—driving, walking, or standing on the corner—and thus are more likely to come to the attention of the authorities. Although more

men are deported than women, deportation policy does not affect only deportees—it also affects their families. When a person is deported, a family often loses a breadwinner.

Current immigration laws, practices, and policies further enhance the extent to which our society is riddled with racism and repression. The general climate of strict enforcement of immigration laws in the post–September 11 era has further exacerbated the situation. A recent nationally representative survey found that 65% of all Latinx people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine said they had experienced some form of discrimination (Krogstad and López 2016). In another set of analyses, 55% of Latinx people surveyed in 2018 said they feared deportation. Deportation fears were higher among non-citizens (74%) yet fully one-third of Latinx US citizens feared deportation (Asad 2020). These numbers indicate that the racial profiling of Latinx people is widespread and that Latinx people are targeted in immigration enforcement efforts.

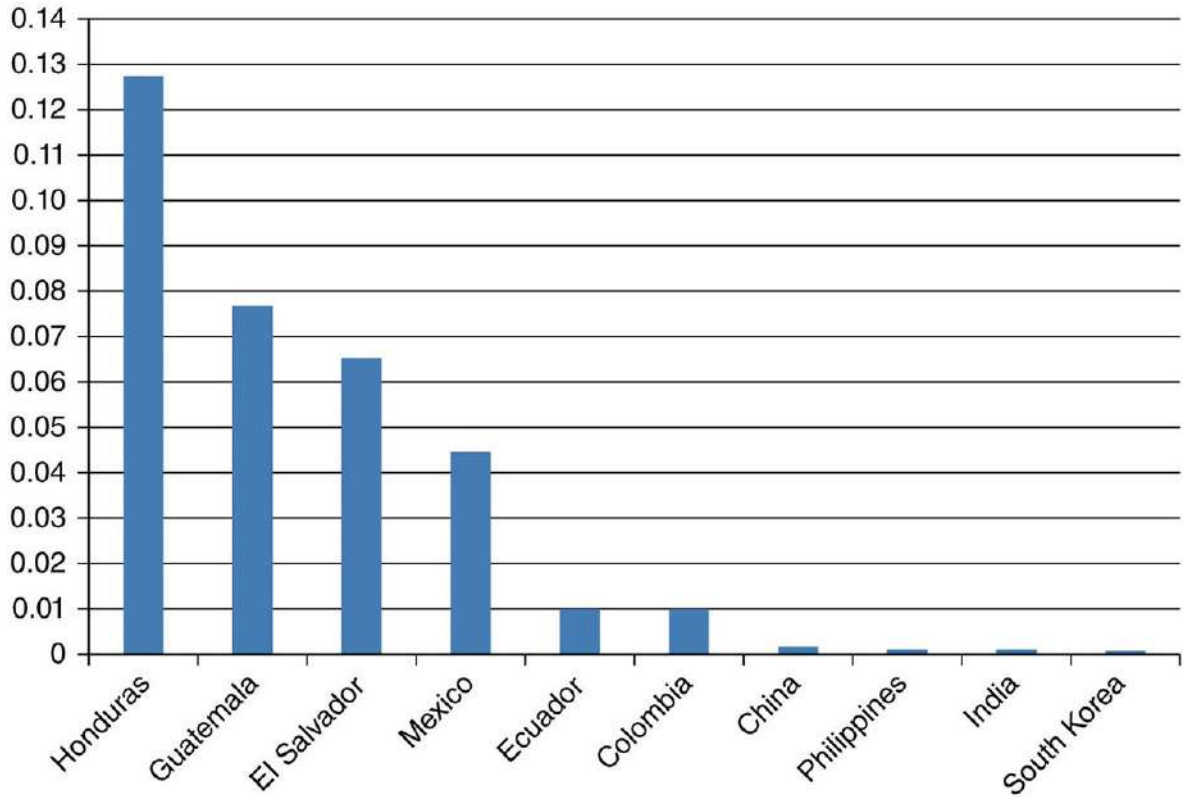


FIGURE 13-8 Ratio of Undocumented Migrants to Deportees, 2014 Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics (2016).

The 1996 deportation laws were punitive. Moreover, they have had a disproportionate effect on people of color. This pattern is consistent with other patterns of systemic racism in this country. The racism embedded in immigration policy is not an isolated case, but a foreseeable by-product of a society that systematically denies the dignity and humanity of people of color. The criminalization of Black men leads to the deportation of a disproportionate number of Dominicans and Jamaicans. The stereotype of Mexicans, and of those who look "Mexican," as "illegals" leads to the targeting of Mexicans and Central Americans in immigration enforcement efforts.

These practices and policies do not simply isolate and remove immigrants of color, but also have detrimental effects on their families, who are, in most cases, also people of color. Those children, spouses, and parents who witness their loved ones being mistreated and banished are also victims of this systematic denial of human rights. In light of patterns of segregation, there are whole communities of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in which children are growing up not only experiencing structural racism in terms of resource provisions, but also witnessing their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, neighbors, and community leaders being told they have no right to be here and, in many cases, being forcibly removed from their communities. Just as African American children often grow up knowing that Black people are more likely than other groups to be "locked up," Mexicans and other Latin American and Caribbean people grow up knowing that people like them are being expelled from this country at the rate of nearly 1,000 people a day (Golash-Boza 2015).

SELF-ASSESSMENT 13.2: Illegal Immigration and Policy Response

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Immigration Policy and Nativism in the Twenty-First Century

At the end of the twentieth century, the United States began to witness a surge in nativism not seen since the 1920s. Historian George Sanchez (1997) suggests that three factors distinguish contemporary racialized nativism from that of a century ago:

- The rise of extreme antipathy toward languages other than English. This feeling is exemplified in a campaign against having to "press 1 for English" and in local efforts to keep libraries from purchasing foreign-language books.
- The concern that Asian, Caribbean, and Latin American immigrants are taking advantage of affirmative action programs designed to help native-born minorities, especially African Americans. This concern can be seen in conversations regarding the high numbers of West Indians entering Ivy League schools.
- The worry that immigrants are draining public resources through the use of welfare, education, and health care services. This sentiment persists even though laws passed in 1996 severely limit immigrants' access to welfare and health services. The Supreme Court decided in *Plyer v. Doe* in 1982 that any child in the United States has the right to an education. Yet nativists see the education of immigrant children as a burden rather than an investment in the future.

The rise of nativism in the United States is closely tied to economic uncertainties. Nativism in the 1920s was connected to the country's difficult transition from a primarily agricultural economy to a massively industrialized one. At the end of the twentieth century, the United States

experienced rapid deindustrialization and the rise of a service-oriented economy. These structural changes in the economy produced economic uncertainty, especially among the working class and poor. Moreover, as native-born Black, White, and Latinx people have been displaced from factory jobs, immigrants have come in to fill jobs in the service sector. As the economy has shifted, native-born workers have not always been able to retool their skill sets or displace themselves to areas of high growth. The widespread perception that immigrants are "taking our jobs" is intimately tied to the rise of nativism.

During Donald Trump's presidential campaign, he played into these fears using nativist and racist language, running his campaign on an anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim platform. He made calls to ban all Muslims from the United States. He referred to Mexicans as "rapists" and emphasized the importance of keeping out "bad hombres." Moreover, he made specific promises to revoke the rights of immigrants. Trump's rallying cry to "build a wall" played into his constituents' racialized fears related to economic and demographic changes in the United States.

Donald Trump did not invent these discourses, but he did tap into them. Despite President Obama's record-high deportations, many people in the United States argued that he was not doing enough to fix what they viewed as the immigration "problem." But Obama also issued an executive order—Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)—which granted reprieve from deportation and a work permit to qualified immigrants who arrived to the United States as minors. Notably, the Trump administration tried to overturn DACA, but, in June 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that DACA could stand.

During the Obama presidency, many states passed their own restrictive laws targeting immigrants. The first major state law was Arizona's Senate Bill (SB) 1070, the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act. This law was followed closely by Alabama's 2011 House Bill (HB) 56, the Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act; and by Georgia's HB 87, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement

Act of 2011. Many of these laws have backfired: when Alabama passed laws restricting the rights of undocumented people, the state experienced a massive outflow of immigrants. These immigrants left jobs behind that went unfilled, as immigrants in Alabama who picked tomatoes for a living could not easily be replaced by the urban unemployed. Native-born workers are unlikely to see the benefit of moving from the city to the countryside to pick tomatoes. The idea that Alabama could simply rid itself of undocumented workers and thereby fix its unemployment problem was ill conceived and riddled with nativist logic.

When Arizona SB 1070 went into effect in July 2010, it sparked national debate, protests, and boycotts. The law required local law enforcement agents to determine the immigration status of any person with whom they interacted during the course of their duties. This meant, for example, that if a police officer responded to a call for domestic violence, he would be required to check the immigration status of both the perpetrator and the victim, if he had reason to believe that either might be in the country unlawfully. SB 1070 was subsequently modified with the enactment of HB 2162 on April 30, 2010, which changed the language such that police officers would only be required to check the immigration status of people during a lawful stop, detention, or arrest. With these modified provisions, SB 1070 only required intervention in those cases in which a person was suspected of violating state laws. These modifications relieved some concerns that the law would make victims of crimes less likely to contact law enforcement officials, yet the possibility of racial profiling remained a substantial problem. According to an amicus brief filed by the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) (2010, 5), "there is simply no unbiased means of implementing the term 'unlawful presence,' because as a legal status there are no observable characteristics of 'unlawful presence,' or readily available means by which a police officer could discern 'unlawful presence' in any stop, detention, or investigative encounter." In 2012, a Supreme Court decision blocked three provisions of the Arizona law, but it upheld the provision that required officers to demand papers from individuals. However, in 2016, the National

Immigration Law Center and other immigrants' rights groups won a lawsuit against the state of Arizona. As a result, officers are no longer required to ask for papers during stops, although they may do so at their own discretion.

Nativism in the twenty-first century is promoted by organizations such as the Federation for Immigration Reform (FAIR) and NumbersUSA, by pundits such as Lou Dobbs and Ann Coulter, and by former president Donald Trump. Trump's nativist statements primarily target undocumented immigrants and Muslims, although in the context of the coronavirus crisis, he also targeted Asians, referring publicly to COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus" and "kung flu."

One example of Trump's Islamophobia translating into law is the "Muslim ban." In January 2017, shortly after taking office, Trump signed an Executive Order called *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States,* temporarily banning the admission of people from seven majority-Muslim countries: Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. The ban was implemented as flights from these countries were in midair, which caused chaos and widespread panic. An outcry on social media followed, and thousands flocked to airports to protest the ban. There was also resistance in the courts: several states and individual plaintiffs sued the federal government on the grounds that the ban was not constitutional. In February 2017, a district judge in Washington State suspended the ban nationwide with a temporary restraining order. Six days later, a district appeals court upheld that ruling. In May 2017, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 10 to 3 against Trump's travel ban, reaffirming the lower court's decision.

The underlying motive for the former president's desire to ban the admission of people from these seven countries is Islamophobia, which manifests here as the fear that people from Muslim countries are the most likely to commit acts of terrorism against the United States. This fear is unfounded. The sum total of people killed by nationals from those seven countries between 1975 and 2015 is zero (Nowrasteh 2017). The Muslim

ban would not make America any safer, but it would have harmful effects on the lives of many people, as the Voices story of the Zarour family shows.

VOICES

The Zarour Family

The scent of black tea and rice wafts through the bare apartment the Zarour family has come to call home after fleeing Syria.

It's been three months since they arrived in El Cajon, [California,] home to the second-largest Iraqi diaspora in the United States. … Starting a new life has been difficult, she says, but it is better than the alternative they escaped four years ago: the crack of strafing fire from government or rebel troops in what was once the city of Homs, and explosions that left only gaping craters or rubble where bustling urban life once hummed. …

Zarour, her husband, and her five children are among the nearly 800 Syrian refugees who arrived in San Diego County last year and settled in El Cajon. California led the nation in resettlement of Syrian refugees in fiscal 2016, taking in 1,450 immigrants, according to the Pew Research Center. … Here, grocery store signs are in English and Arabic. Posters advertise realty and investment services in both languages, alongside signs for concerts headlined by Arab pop stars.

At the downtown El Cajon farmers market, resettlement agencies set up booths to explain their services and hand out ACLU pamphlets about the right to wear a hijab. Iraqi vendors work one table over, selling cilantro, turnips and herbs from a community garden maintained by immigrants and refugees. A sign hanging from their tent in Arabic asks shoppers not to haggle over vegetable prices. …

Two years after the Syrian civil war began, Zarour abandoned his small supermarket in Homs and gave up his work molding custom ceilings. The family settled in Damascus before it too became too dangerous. They fled to Zaatari refugee camp, a squalid but sprawling outpost near the Jordanian-Syrian border.

They spent 20 days in the camp before they moved to another town. …

Early in their stay in Jordan, they registered as refugees with the United Nations. Eventually, after two years of interviews, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees referred them for resettlement in the United States. …

Adjusting to a new life in America has bruised the pride of a man accustomed to providing for his family.

He struggles to learn the skills taught in workshops mandated by resettlement agencies—basics such as learning English, navigating public transportation or how to open a bank account. Attending those classes is tied to the financial aid the family receives.

To fit all seven people in their small two-bedroom apartment, the five children sleep wall-to-wall in the master bedroom. He and his wife sleep in the spare room.

The three couches in his living room were donated.

Before the war in Syria, he had a home of his own, lived near his siblings, and held a government job that helped him pay the bills. As he places a glass of tea on the cardboard box he now uses as a coffee table, Zarour wonders if he will ever find a piece of the happiness he once knew.

Source: Parvini 2017.

RESEARCH FOCUS

The Refugee Crisis at the United States–Mexico Border

by Maria Duenas

Several exclusionary immigration policies have emerged recently that continue the extensive historical legacies of racist immigration policies in the United States. As of 2019, two policies developed that are deliberately intended to exclude predominantly low-income, immigrants of color from the Global South: the Remain in Mexico program and the Interim Final Rule (IFR).

In December 2018, the United States began the Remain in Mexico program which requires that migrants who pass through Mexico into the United States and request political asylum in the United States stay in Mexico as they await news on their case. In July 2019, The Interim Final Rule automatically declines asylum to migrants who have traveled to the United States by land through other countries if they have not first requested asylum in the countries they have travelled through. Both policies violate the rights of migrants afforded to them by the *Immigration and Nationality Act* because all migrants should be able to apply for asylum regardless of how they entered the country and remain in the United States while their cases are reviewed. Further, deterrence policies such as these neither reduce migration flows nor provide viable comprehensive immigration reform.

The vast majority of asylum seekers are vulnerable populations such as trauma survivors, children, transwomen, and others who migrate due to intersecting systemic oppressions, such as racial, gender, class, political, religious, and cultural violence in their countries of origin. Transwomen migrants, for example, are driven to migrate due to unsafe and dangerous conditions they face. In a 2015 report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 15 transwomen from El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico reported

experiencing gender discrimination, sexual harassment, physical abuse against themselves and their trans friends, and were forced into sex trafficking. The police offered little to no protection and sometimes participated in the violence.

International refugee laws aim to protect the legal, economic, and social rights of refugees. However, asylum seekers are often met with suspicion due to the ideologies of wanting to protect the border. The systemic forms of oppression asylum seekers are fleeing has led advocates to call for international human rights protection for asylum seekers. Race and racisms, along with other forms of oppression, shape whose lives are deemed worthy to protect and enter the country.

Source: Canizales 2019; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2015.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 13.3: Immigration Policy and Nativism in the Twenty-First Century

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Conclusion and Discussion

How far have we come since 1882, the year the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed? The immigration laws enacted since 1965 in the United States do not have overt racial provisions like the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act or the 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act. We also have not seen anything as egregious as the 1954 Operation Wetback. Laws with these names would be untenable in thetwenty-first-century United States. Nevertheless, we continue to see both the racially uneven consequences of immigration laws and racialized sentiments directed at particular national-origin and racial groups.

This chapter has shown that U.S. immigration policy has been racialized from the beginning. At the same time, the way these policies have been racialized has changed over time, as racial ideologies have shifted. Throughout history, nativism has also consistently reared its head, although in different ways over time.

Harvard professor Aristide Zolberg titled his 2009 book on immigration policy *A Nation by Design*, hinting at the ways that immigration policy has been deployed with the goal of creating an ideal populace. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed to end the influx of Chinese laborers. The 1924 Immigration Act was designed to recruit immigrants from northern and western Europe and to exclude immigrants from the rest of the world. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act was passed in the name of civil rights and ostensibly to create a diverse society, yet ended up creating a large undocumented Mexican population. The 1986 laws were passed with the hope of ending immigration. When that did not work, the 1996 laws made life more difficult and precarious for immigrants. The current state laws are designed with the hope that immigrants will self-deport. The push toward changing immigration laws

at the national level is driven in large part by a desire to limit the number of non-White immigrants allowed to enter the United States. As the number of non-White immigrants has grown since 1965, we have seen increasingly harsh and restrictive immigration laws and proposals. These changes were heightened during the Trump administration, which made more than one thousand policy changes to the immigration system. In his first weeks in office, President Biden attempted to undo a few of these changes. However, it would take major Congressional action to overhaul immigration laws in the United States and to disrupt their racially biased foundations.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 13.4: Conclusion and Discussion

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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

13.1 How does the history of U.S. immigration policy reflect racism and nativism?

- Nativism and racism have been intertwined in U.S. immigration policies since the beginning of the nation's history.
- The first piece of immigration legislation was the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. Laws continued to be racialized over the course of the twentieth century.

Review

» What is the significance of the Chinese Exclusion Act and the court cases that stemmed from it?

» Why was Operation Wetback important?

Critical Thinking

» How has immigration changed the United States?

» How have economic circumstances played a role in the passage of immigration laws?

» How did U.S. colonial and imperial relationships with other countries affect migration flows?

13.2 How has U.S. policy responded to undocumented immigration?

- Prior to 1965, there were no numerical restrictions on Mexican immigration.

- Passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act and the subsequent 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act created the problem of illegal immigration. Since then, more restrictive laws have been passed.

Review

» What were some major changes brought about by the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act?

» What legislative changes sparked Asian and Latin American immigration in the late twentieth century?

» What restrictive immigration laws were passed in the late twentieth century?

Critical Thinking

» Are IRCA and IIRIRA related to racialized sentiments? How so?

13.3 What is the relationship between nativism and racism in the twenty-first century?

- The 1996 laws were restrictive and have led to the deportation of thousands of immigrants—mostly Black and Latinx men.

Review

» How does contemporary nativism differ from that of previous historical periods?

Critical Thinking

» Why are Latin American immigrants the most likely to be deported?

Talking about Race

There are no statutes of limitations for illegal entry (laws specifying how long after events a case may begin), as there are for most other crimes. The next time you hear someone say something such as “what part of illegal don’t you understand?” try bringing up statutes of limitations. For example, you could explain that a person who shoplifted in 2010 wouldn’t be brought to trial for it in 2018, yet an immigrant can be deported for illegal entry even decades after the original offense. Use this as an entry point for broader discussions of illegal immigration.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 13.5: Check Your Understanding

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

LIST OF KEY TERMS

1965 Immigration and Nationality Act

Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA)

bracero program

Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA)

Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA)

legal permanent resident

McCarran Internal Security Act

nativism

Operation Wetback

Oriental Exclusion Act

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)

PART III

CONTESTING & COMPARING RACIAL INJUSTICES

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

14

Racial Justice in the United States Today

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

“Civilization is a method of living, an attitude of equal respect of all men,”—Jane Addams, Speech, Honolulu, 1933. From the series Great Ideas of Western Man. George Giusti. 1955. India ink and gouache on paper, 24-7/8 × 18-5/16 in. (*Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC/Art Resource, NY*)

As You Read

14.1 What does racial justice look like?

14.2 How can we achieve racial justice?

14.3 What is the connection between racial justice and empathy?

14.4 Why is a singular focus on racism insufficient to achieve racial justice?

On the fiftieth anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington, civil rights lawyer, author, and activist Michelle Alexander posted the following update on her public Facebook page. Her comments provide a great starting point for a conversation about racial justice, the limits of civil rights, and the connections between mass incarceration and other forms of exclusion here and abroad. Her work also raises important questions about the relationship between racism and capitalism.

For the past several years, I have spent virtually all my working hours writing about or speaking about the immorality, cruelty, racism, and insanity of our nation's latest caste system: mass incarceration. On this Facebook page I have written and posted about little else. But as I pause today to reflect on the meaning and significance of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, I realize that my focus has been too narrow. Five years after the March, Dr. King was speaking out against the Vietnam War, condemning America's militarism and imperialism—famously stating that our nation was the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world." He saw the connections between the wars we wage abroad, and the utter indifference we

have for poor people, and people of color at home. He saw the necessity of openly critiquing an economic system that will fund war and will reward greed, hand over fist, but will not pay workers a living wage. Five years after the March on Washington, Dr. King was ignoring all those who told him to just stay in his lane, just stick to talking about civil rights. Yet here I am decades later, staying in my lane. I have not been speaking publicly about the relationship between drones abroad and the War on Drugs at home. I have not been talking about the connections between the corrupt capitalism that bails out Wall Street bankers, moves jobs overseas, and forecloses on homes with zeal, all while private prisons yield high returns and expand operations into a new market: caging immigrants. I have not been connecting the dots between the NSA spying on millions of Americans, the labeling of mosques as “terrorist organizations,” and the spy programs of the 1960s and ‘70s —specifically the FBI and COINTELPRO programs that placed civil rights advocates under constant surveillance, infiltrated civil rights organizations, and assassinated racial justice leaders. I have been staying in my lane. But no more. In my view, the most important lesson we can learn from Dr. King is not what he said at the March on Washington, but what he said and did after. In the years that followed, he did not play politics to see what crumbs a fundamentally corrupt system might toss to the beggars of justice. Instead he connected the dots and committed himself to building a movement that would shake the foundations of our economic and social order, so that the dream he preached in 1963 might one day be a reality for all. He said that nothing less than “a radical restructuring of society” could possibly ensure justice and dignity for all. He was right. I am still committed to building a movement to end mass incarceration, but I will not do it with blinders on. If all we do

> is end mass incarceration, this movement will not have gone nearly far enough. A new system of racial and social control will be born again, all because we did not do what King demanded we do: connect the dots between poverty, racism, militarism, and materialism. I'm getting out of my lane. I hope you're already out of yours.
>
> *Source*: *Alexander 2013*.

A former civil rights lawyer, Michelle Alexander has focused on mass incarceration as one of the most pressing racial justice issues for African Americans today. In her Facebook post of August 28, 2013 (see above), she reflects on the possibility that her focus has been too narrow. Drawing inspiration from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Alexander considers the fact that King also condemned America's militarism and imperialism and explored the connections among wars, poverty, and racism. She reflects on the fact that there are relationships among the outsourcing of jobs overseas, home foreclosures, mass detention of immigrants, and mass incarceration.

In this book, we have focused on the history of the idea of race, the changing nature of racism, and various ideologies and institutions that perpetuate racism. Where do we go from here? Now that we know the extent of racism in U.S. society, what do we do about it? Moreover, is a singular focus on race and racism enough?

Perspectives on Racial Justice

What is **racial justice**? There is no correct answer to this question, as racial justice looks different depending on your perspective, but we will define it broadly here as the creation of a society devoid of racial oppression. For some people, racial justice involves the passage of effective laws and policies that create a nondiscriminatory society. These laws also look different according to your perspective. For some, racial justice requires granting reparations for people who have suffered racial injustices. For others, strengthening civil rights law is the most effective strategy. Still others advocate for a human rights perspective. And, as we will discuss later, some people advocate for a much more expansive perspective on racial justice—one that addresses gender and economic justice as well. For many thinkers, racial justice involves the eradication of White supremacy.

Recognition, Responsibility, Reconstruction, and Reparations

Racism has caused tremendous harm, and some argue that this harm merits a response. One proposed solution involves providing compensation for victims of racism. Eric Yamamoto (2009) delineates four steps on the path to racial justice from this perspective: recognition, responsibility, reconstruction, and reparations. He argues that these four steps are necessary to begin to redress the harms created by racism. Let's take a look at each step so that we can evaluate the extent to which they might lead us to racial justice.

Children wave U.S. flags at the fiftieth anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington.

Recognition is the first step, when we recognize the harms created by racism. This step requires empathy, illustrated by society's ability to understand the anger, hurt, and material loss caused by racism. For example, empathetic mothers of white boys would relate to how mothers of Black boys felt after Cleveland police officer Timothy Loehmann shot and killed twelve-year-old Tamir Rice within two seconds of arriving outside a recreation center where the sixth-grader was playing with a pellet gun. Recognition extends to the particularity of different groups' experiences, such as how African Americans feel about slavery, Native Americans about genocide, and Japanese Americans about internment. Recognition is viewed as an essential first step because it allows us to reflect on the gravity of racial harms. We must come to terms with the fact that these wrongdoings continue to affect people's lives and outlooks today. Recognition permits everyone to see, for example, that African

Americans are unlikely to take jokes about slavery or lynching lightly and that Native Americans are often deeply offended when sports teams use names that are racial slurs, such as the Redskins.

Responsibility asks people to acknowledge that someone is responsible for harms inflicted on racial groups. The question of responsibility often comes up with regard to the enslavement of African Americans. Who is responsible? Individual slaveowners? Their descendants? The financial institutions that supported slavery? All White Americans? The U.S. government? How do we think about responsibility for slavery given that it was abolished in the United States in 1865? These are difficult questions, but it is clear the United States has yet to atone for the injustice of slavery.

Reconstruction, the third dimension of racial justice, involves acting on the acknowledgment that harm has been committed. Once you recognize that harm has been done and figure out who should be held responsible, it is necessary to take action. One form such action can take is an apology. In 1995, the Southern Baptist Convention issued a resolution apologizing "to all African Americans for condoning and/or perpetuating individual and systemic racism in our lifetime" (Southern Baptist Convention 1995). In 2009, the U.S. Congress issued a formal apology for slavery. The apology, however, came with the caveat that it was not meant to provide the basis for reparations (Thompson 2009). The idea of reconstruction raises the question of how the United States can act on the acknowledgments that slavery is part of the nation's history and that Native Americans' lands were unlawfully taken.

Reparations, the fourth and ultimate dimension of racial justice, refers to the act of repairing damage and providing restitution for past harms. A program of reparations has three main objectives: acknowledgment of past injustice, redress for the injustice, and closure. One example of reparations is the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which acknowledged that a great injustice had been committed against Japanese Americans when they were interned during World War II. The act mandated that Congress

pay each victim of internment $20,000 in reparations and renewed the question of reparations for African Americans.

Economist William Darity (2008) argues that three types of injustices have occurred that justify reparations for African Americans: slavery, legal segregation, and ongoing present-day discrimination. Darity's arguments are a reminder that reparations should contend not only with slavery but with the long shadow it cast, from Jim Crow to contemporary racism.

What would reparations for slavery look like? After emancipation, freed slaves did not receive land in return for their years of labor. Darity (2008) argues that if such land reform had taken place, each former slave would have received ten acres of land. He further estimates that the land would have cost about $10 per acre in 1865. That means that the 4 million slaves who were emancipated at the end of the Civil War would have received a total of 40 million acres of land, valued at $400 million. The 2008 value of that money would amount to $1.3 trillion today—or about $400,000 per contemporary descendant of enslaved Africans. A different set of calculations by Thomas Craemer (2018) leads to a similar amount—of $374,000 per African-descended person.

These calculations of roughly $400,000 per person account only for slavery, not for decades of legal segregation or for contemporary discrimination. Other scholars have calculated the racial losses and gains of labor market discrimination. Darity's estimate is that discrimination in employment from 1929 to 1969 produced a total benefit of $1.6 trillion to White people by the 1980s (Darity 2008). The figure would be much higher if adjusted to present-day dollars. Studies continue to show that White people earn an average of 10 to 20 percent more than Black people with similar educational levels and work experience (Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009). The dollar value of accumulated ongoing discrimination is in the trillions. How do we grapple with the fact that discrimination has real monetary costs for African Americans?

Because of historical and ongoing discrimination, some scholars are calling for reparations for African Americans. These reparations could take the form of direct cash transfers. However, reparations do not have to mean sending checks to each African American family. Alternatively, they could also involve investment in education in African American communities, educational scholarships, community development funds, construction of monuments and museums dedicated to African American culture and history, and land grants.

One question we can raise about reparations is whether they would address ongoing racism. Reparations usually focus on past wrongs, yet racism is an ongoing issue. Many White American families accumulated wealth during slavery as a direct result of the enslavement of Africans. There are also many African American families whose impoverishment can be traced back to slavery. It can, however, be very difficult to tease out exactly which families benefited from slavery. Nevertheless, it is clear that slavery has had a lasting impact on our society, and it may be unreasonable to expect African Americans to move on and forget about it without some sort of response from the state. Moreover, as conceptualized by William Darity, reparations programs would redress not only the harms of slavery, but also the harms of Jim Crow laws and ongoing discrimination.

Another question about reparations concerns how such a program would consider the different facets of racism in our society. Racism affects people in different ways depending on their social location and factors such as their race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship. For example, if a reparations program built community centers in impoverished urban communities, it would be helpful mostly to people in those communities, but not to people in rural areas or to middle-class people who would never use those community centers.

An activist at a 2017 march in San Francisco calls for reparations for the descendants of slaves.

Chapter 14.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Civil Rights

Michelle Alexander is one of many African Americans who have taken up the issue of civil rights as a means to fight for racial justice. **Civil rights**, according to Roy Brooks, are "government-sanctioned freedoms and privileges designed to promote equal opportunity" (2009, 4). Brooks further notes that equal opportunity may require different treatment for groups that are situated differently in society.

Civil rights include the right to a fair trial, the right of each adult in the United States to a vote, the right to not face discrimination in employment, and the right to have equal access to public education. The main idea is that we have the right to *not* be discriminated against, as stated in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Thus, even though we have the right to vote, the government is not required to provide free transportation to voting booths. Instead, the spirit of the law is that the government or other bodies cannot make it more difficult for some groups to vote than others.

A key victory in the civil rights movement was the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which was designed to prevent discrimination from occurring at the voting booth. Prior to passage of this act, some jurisdictions had measures in place that were specifically designed to prevent African Americans from voting.

Just as an act can be passed, its provisions can be repealed. In 2013, the Supreme Court did just that, holding that Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act was unconstitutional. Section 4 required nine states, mostly in the South, to seek federal approval prior to changing their election laws, voting districts, or voter ID provisions, a process called *preclearance*. This part of the act had been included because of the history of discrimination in these nine states. In the 2013 decision, the Supreme Court decided that this measure was unconstitutional and that states could change their voting laws if they so desired.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg issued a dissent in response, arguing that the Voting Rights Act is needed because minority voters continue to experience barriers to voting. She noted that the Voting Rights Act's requirement of preclearance of all voting laws for the nine identified states has a history of effectiveness in upholding minority voting rights (*Shelby County, Alabama, Petitioner v. Eric H. Holder, Jr., Attorney General, et al.*). In contrast, the Court held that these provisions were no longer necessary in today's world. It is remarkable that the Court made this decision even though North Carolina—one of the states in question—

had used the new rules to redraw its districts such that there were ten Republican districts and three Democrat districts. Even though North Carolina is evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats, the voting districts have been successfully gerrymandered to ensure that ten out of thirteen seats in North Carolina went to Republican candidates in 2016.

The 2013 repeal of Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act points to a major barrier to civil rights work in the United States: it is hard to legislate against discrimination when many people believe it is no longer a problem. The Supreme Court's justification for repealing these provisions was that racial dynamics have changed since 1965. As outlined in Chapter Three, they have. However, many would argue that racial inequality in voting rights continues to be an issue. Remarkably, the Supreme Court agreed in a subsequent decision. In May 2017, the Supreme Court struck down North Carolina's redistricting laws, ruling that packing the majority of African Americans into two districts is unconstitutional.

Civil rights victories, despite setbacks, have been monumental in the United States. Nevertheless, the civil rights discourse has its limits. One issue is that in a society in which everyone decries racism and few people consider themselves racist, it can be extremely difficult to prove that a person has indeed been discriminated against. For example, simply showing that African Americans get longer sentences than White Americans for similar offenses is not enough to prove that African Americans' civil rights have been violated, due to a 1987 Supreme Court decision—*McCleskey v. Kemp*.

Warren McClesky, a Black man, was sentenced to death for murder of a White police officer. McClesky provided statistical evidence that death sentences were more likely to be given to African Americans convicted of killing White Americans than vice-versa and thus argued that his sentence was discriminatory. In a 5-4 ruling, the justices ruled that it was not sufficient to show there were statistical differences as these did not show intent. That decision meant that racial bias in sentencing cannot be

challenged unless there is clear evidence of discriminatory intent—which is very difficult to prove. Since the *McCleskey v. Kemp* decision, clear evidence of discriminatory *intent* must be provided to have a court case.

A second limitation of the civil rights approach is that U.S. civil rights laws only provide for protection from discrimination and equality of opportunity. They do not guarantee any sort of equality of outcomes. For example, if a corporation pays all of its Black employees 20 percent less than its White employees, even though they have similar levels of human capital, a civil rights case could not be brought against the corporation without proof of mechanisms that actively produce this discrimination. Simply showing that the Black employees earn less than the White employees is not sufficient evidence to bring a case.

Human Rights

Some thinkers contrast the civil rights vision with a human rights vision (Blau and Moncada 2005). Civil rights laws tend to provide protection from discrimination but do not provide the right to anything in particular; they are thus called negative rights. By contrast, positive rights provide the right to something specific, such as health care. For example, under a civil rights vision, you could say that doctors cannot discriminate against patients on the basis of skin color. Under a human rights vision, we could advocate for the right to health care for all, regardless of skin color. We could also envision making demands for the rights to adequate housing and education.

A **human rights** framework, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other doctrines, is more comprehensive than a civil rights framework. It encompasses civil rights and thus includes the right to not face discrimination. Yet, it is broader than just civil rights, and it argues for the universal extension of rights such as good health care and an adequate standard of living. In Belarus, for example, the national constitution guarantees the right to health care. In South Africa, the

constitution guarantees the right to adequate housing. These rights are derived from the UDHR and other documents, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

Excerpts from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
   …

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Excerpt from the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

Article 12

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
2. The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for:
    a. The provision for the reduction of the stillbirth-rate and of infant mortality and for the healthy development of the child;
    b. The improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene;
    c. The prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases;
    d. The creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

The trouble with the human rights framework is that it is not part of U.S. law, and therefore these claims are unenforceable. Incorporating human rights into U.S. law would require changing the Constitution, which some scholars have advocated (Feagin 2001; Blau and Moncada 2006). Judith Blau and Alberto Moncada (2006, 20), for example, argue that people in the United States have no legal recourse when they become homeless, have no health care, or cannot afford to pay for college or even to put dinner on the table, because “the U.S. Constitution fails to give them

rights to housing, a job, an education, food security, health care, and so forth. The United States has not signed the international treaties that make states responsible for upholding the rights of their citizens."

In light of these limitations of our Constitution, scholar Joe Feagin also advocates for a new Constitutional Convention. Unlike the first Constitutional Convention in 1787, Feagin's assembly would not be made up entirely of White male property owners. Instead, it would have representation from every sector of society. It would have equal representation of men and women; proportional representation from each racial group; and diversity in terms of sexual orientation, disability, and class status. A new Constitutional Convention would provide this country with a renewed chance to create a society that is not built on systemic racism.

VOICES

How the Murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd Reignited a Movement

On Sunday, February 23, 2020, around 1 p.m., Ahmaud Arbery, a twenty-five-year-old African American man, went for a jog near his home in Brunswick, Georgia. Two White men, Gregory and Travis McMichael, saw him running and got into their pickup truck to chase him. Gregory McMichael, sixty-four, is a former police officer, and believed that Ahmaud Arbery was a suspect in recent neighborhood crimes. The McMichaels decided to take the law into their own hands and armed themselves with a .357 magnum and a shotgun and went after Arbery. They blocked his path with their pickup truck. This led to a struggle, and Travis McMichael shot Ahmaud Arbery three times. Arbery died as a result of the gunshots. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation did not make any arrests in the immediate aftermath of the murder. However, on May 5, 2020, a video of the incident was made public, which led to widespread protests and outrage. On May 7, 2020, Travis and Gregory McMichael were arrested and charged with aggravated assault and murder. On May 21, William Bryan, who had recorded the incident, was also arrested and charged with murder and attempted false imprisonment, as authorities had reason to believe Bryan also had been involved.

On the night of March 13, 2020, in Louisville, Kentucky, three police officers used a battering ram to crash into the home of Breonna Taylor, a twenty-six-year-old African American emergency room technician. Her boyfriend woke up, and believing the officers to be robbers, fired a shot, hitting one of the officers in the leg. The officers responded by firing more than 20 rounds into the apartment. Breonna Taylor was hit eight times with bullets and died at the scene. The officers had a no-knock warrant to enter Taylor's apartment, which they secured based on their belief that Taylor's ex-boyfriend was storing drugs or money at her home. This warrant

allowed the officers to enter the home without warning and without identifying themselves as law enforcement. When the officers broke down Taylor's door, her ex-boyfriend was already in custody and Taylor had not seen him in two years. Breonna Taylor's family filed suit on April 27, 2020, alleging excessive force and gross negligence. The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) is investigating the shooting. The three officers have been placed on administrative reassignment.

On Monday, May 25, a White forty-four-year-old Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin, handcuffed George Floyd, a forty-six-year-old African American man, and pinned him to the ground. Bystanders' video recorded Officer Chauvin using his knee to pin Floyd by his neck. He kept his knee planted in his neck for eight minutes and fifty-three seconds, even as Floyd told Chauvin and the three officers standing close by that he could not breathe. He kept his knee planted for two minutes and fifty-three seconds after Floyd became nonresponsive. The video of the murder of George Floyd circulated widely on social media and sparked protests in Minneapolis, and then around the country.

On Tuesday, May 26, the Minneapolis police chief fired all four officers involved in the murder of George Floyd. On May 29, Derek Chauvin was arrested and charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter.

These three extrajudicial killings of Black people sparked a wave of protests around the country that persisted well into the summer of 2020. These protests were met with state-sponsored repression, as police officers shot tear gas and rubber bullets into crowds and mayors invoked curfews in cities across the country.

Sources: Barajas and Savidge 2020; North and Cineas 2020; Oppel Jr., Taylor, and Bogel-Burroughs 2021; Read and Lampen 2020; Taylor 2021; MacFarquhar, Arango, and Fernandez 2020.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 14.1: Perspectives on Racial Justice

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Struggles for Racial Justice

Struggles for racial justice are being waged right now. One recent example is the fight of Native Americans against the Dakota Access Pipeline—a construction project that could endanger the lives and well-being of a Native American tribe. North Dakota has recently undergone an oil boom, in part owing to a new technology called fracking, which allows for oil to be drilled from beneath the earth. One issue oil companies face is getting the oil from North Dakota to the rest of the country. Pipelines allow for crude oil to be transported underground.

In 2015, a coalition of business interests known as Energy Transfer Partners began the process of constructing a pipeline to transport crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. When the Standing Rock Tribe learned the pipeline would pass through their reservation, they requested a full archaeological investigation, which never took place (Sammon 2016). Although North Dakota has experienced economic growth thanks to the oil boom, the Standing Rock Sioux reservation sits in one of the poorest counties in the nation. Nearly 40 percent of the residents of the reservation live below the poverty line, and the unemployment rate is 86 percent. They do not stand to benefit economically from construction of the pipeline, yet they will face consequences if the pipeline bursts.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux feared the pipeline could burst and contaminate the Missouri River. For this reason they mounted a protest in opposition to the pipeline. On April 1, 2015, members of the tribe launched a prayer camp to protest the pipeline. They called on other tribes to join them. Over 300 tribes came together in solidarity in an effort to shut down construction of the pipeline (Democracy Now 2016).

Protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2016. The construction of the pipeline could endanger the lives and well-being of a tribe of Native Americans.

Energy Transfer Partners began construction in May 2016. In July 2016, the Army Corps of Engineers granted permits for the pipeline to cross beneath the Missouri and Cannon Ball rivers. Although this pipeline would pass through tribal lands, the Army Corps of Engineers did not seek approval from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. As a result, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers on July 27, 2016, and asked them to stop construction immediately (EarthJustice 2016).

On September 3, 2016, bulldozers came to prepare the ground to install the pipeline. Hundreds of protestors gathered to protest the construction. When the protestors went through the fence, the result was violent confrontation. Security guards hit and pushed protestors, unleashed dogs

on them, and sprayed pepper spray in protestors' faces. Eventually, the protestors were able to stop the construction for that day (Democracy Now 2016).

Over the next couple of months, thousands of people gathered at Standing Rock to protest the pipeline. By December 2016, there were 7,000 people camping at Standing Rock in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Even though authorities have deployed pepper spray, rubber bullets, and water cannons at the protestors, and even though temperatures are well below freezing, the protestors persisted (Mele 2016). However, shortly after taking office, on January 24, President Donald Trump signed a memorandum ordering the Secretary of the Army to expedite approval of the Dakota Access Pipeline. And, on February 22, 2017, state officials ordered the protestors to evacuate. Just before the final evacuation, protestors set fire to the camp.

These struggles for justice are sometimes victorious. We saw a positive development, for example, in the case of Marissa Alexander, an African American woman who went to prison in 2012 for firing a warning shot in self-defense. Marissa's husband, who had assaulted her in the past, had called her names and threatened to beat her after she gave birth to a premature baby. Becoming scared, she picked up a gun and fired a warning shot into her kitchen wall, an act that resulted in her arrest. Marissa was sentenced to twenty years in prison, even though this was her first conviction, her warning shot did not hurt anyone, and even though she was subject to the same self-defense laws in Florida as George Zimmerman was in the Trayvon Martin case. When activists heard of her case, they launched a campaign to have her freed from prison. After two years, Alexander's case was overturned, and she was issued a new trial but remained behind bars (Salzillo 2013). However, owing to activism around the country, she was released just in time for Thanksgiving. Prior to Alexander's retrial, she pleaded guilty to three felony charges of aggravated assault and received a sentence of three years in prison. Since this sentence included the 1,030 days she had already served, she

returned to prison for only an additional 65 days and was released from prison in January 2015.

Although the twenty-first century has seen increased repression against immigrants in the United States, interracial coalitions have been successful at pushing back against nativist forces. One of these coalitions is MIRA (Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance)—a Black–Latinx coalition that has stopped more than 300 anti-immigrant bills from passing in the state, making Mississippi the only state in the Deep South without any enforceable anti-immigrant bills. Since its founding, MIRA has argued that "all immigration laws … are about two things: racism and managing labor" and in doing so has made Black and Latinx issues "inextricably linked" (Brown and Jones 2016, 39). In Mississippi, political partnerships between Black and Latinx people are so strong that members of the Black Caucus are Latinx immigrants' strongest allies and "immigration is widely known as a 'Black issue' in the state" (36). In 2015, Black representatives and leaders from the ACLU, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and unions marched alongside Latinx immigrant activists chanting "Sí Se Puede!" (Yes, We Can!).

Racial Justice and the Foreclosure Crisis

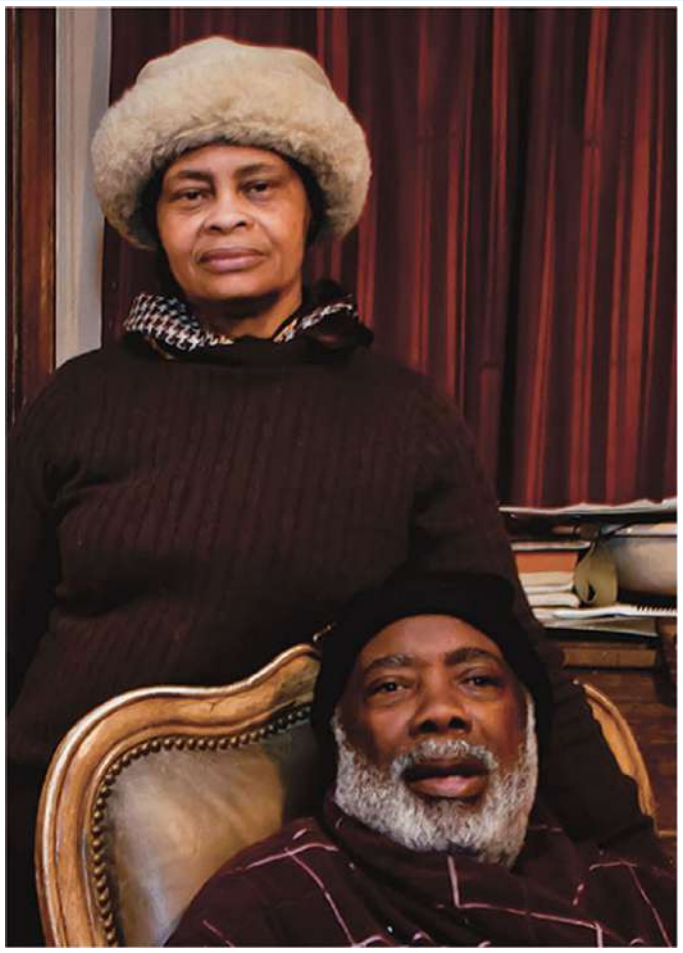
In Chapter Ten, we learned about racial disparities in housing, including those in the most recent foreclosure crisis. As you may recall, in the 1990s and early 2000s, predatory lenders began to aggressively target Black and Latinx homeowners and potential buyers, offering subprime loans. By 2000, 18 percent of Black or Latinx homeowners had these loans—up from only 2 percent in 1993. In comparison, less than 10 percent of White homeowners had subprime loans in 2000. By 2009, over 15 percent of subprime loans were in foreclosure (Rugh and Massey 2010; Dymksi, Hernandez, and Mohanty 2013). Many of these foreclosures happened because homes in Black and Latinx neighborhoods did not increase in value as anticipated. The unfavorable loans left homeowners owing more

money than their homes were worth, so that foreclosure was often their best financial option. However, as the story of the Garretts shows, sometimes foreclosure is not the best option, especially for families. Family homes have important sentimental value, and some families are simply not willing to walk away from them.

VOICES

Fighting against Foreclosures: A Racial Justice Story

In 1990, William and Bertha Garrett purchased their dream home in Detroit and were able to move out of their rented apartment. William owned a barber shop, and Bertha was a homemaker and author. They were happy to find out that most of the residents on the block were, like them, African Americans born in the South who had relocated to Detroit in search of opportunities.



Bertha and William Garrett.

They moved into the home with their six children and immediately got to work beautifying the house and turning it into their family

home. They were especially proud of the expansive backyard, which hosted three family weddings.

Within a few years, the Garretts were able to pay off their $40,000 mortgage in full. In 1998, Bertha received a call from a lender who convinced her to take out a second mortgage for $45,000. He told her the equity in her home was just sitting there and that she should invest it. Although Bertha did not know it, this man was a predatory lender who sought out families and convinced them to take on loans with unfavorable conditions. A disproportionate number of people who took on these loans were African American.

With children in college and ministry school, the extra money seemed like a good idea. It may have been a good idea, and Bertha may have qualified to take out a second mortgage from a bank with a fixed rate. However, she was not aware of the unfavorable conditions of the loan from the predatory lender and signed on to a new adjustable-rate mortgage. This mortgage meant that they initially had a low interest rate, but when interest rates went up, their debt ballooned to $190,000—quadruple what they had initially borrowed. The Garretts were unable to keep up with the rising payments and turned to their daughter, Michelle, for help.

Michelle bought the home from them and negotiated the debt down to $125,000. This brought their monthly payments down to $900. Soon, however, the payments went up to $1,300. With this type of mortgage, rates go up and down with the prevailing interest rates. Meanwhile, William fell ill and became legally blind. As a result, he had to close the barber shop and no longer had an income.

Bertha applied for a loan modification in an effort to reduce the monthly mortgage. Instead, her payments rose to $1,650 a month. Michelle agreed to help her mother with the payments. She did, until she was laid off from her own job.

Once the Garretts missed payments, the bank sold their mortgage to another company, and the payments jumped to $2,500

a month. These mortgage payments were for much more than the house was worth: a house down the street sold for $3,500 during this time.

Unwilling to give up their home, the family continued to scrape together the money to pay until they simply could not and had nothing left to sell. In December 2010, the Garretts received a foreclosure notice.

Shame kept Bertha Garrett from telling anyone about the pending foreclosure. Her husband's health was not improving. She did not know it, but several other homes on her block were also in foreclosure. In the city of Detroit, banks foreclosed on over 100,000 homes between 2000 and 2010.

A bank bought Bertha's home for $12,000, and she received an eviction notice in November 2011. She was still not willing to leave her home. On her eviction day in January 2012, a small crowd formed around the Garretts's home. Bertha had finally reached out, and several activist groups got together to support her and fight her eviction. Under Detroit law, an eviction cannot take place without a dumpster parked in front of the home. When the dumpster arrived, the residents refused to let it down the street. The driver eventually gave up and left.

Meanwhile, Bertha was downtown, insisting that she be given an opportunity to speak with a representative from her mortgage company. When the secretary told her she couldn't speak with anyone, Bertha lay down in front of the door of the New York Mellon Corporation and refused to move. Her demand was that the corporation sell her the house she called home for the $12,000 the corporation had paid for it.

Eventually, the mortgage company gave in to the activist pressure and the press attention and sold Mrs. Garrett back her home for $12,000. (This price may sound low, but on January 31, 2013, the house next door sold for $14,000.)

Sources: Gottesdiener 2013; Abbey-Lambertz 2012; and Zillow.com.

DREAMers and the Fight for Justice

The United States currently has about 11 million undocumented immigrants. Many of them are youth who have grown up in the United States and who feel that they belong in this country. In many ways, their struggle for rights is a struggle for racial justice because the vast majority of undocumented immigrants are people of color.

In 2001, immigrant rights groups pushed Congress to propose a bill called the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. Although they were unsuccessful in getting the bill passed, their efforts led to a movement designed to fight for the rights of DREAMers—youth who are undocumented and yet have grown up in the United States and have completed most of their schooling in this country. Many of these youth identify as Americans. Often, their parents do not tell them they are undocumented until they are teenagers. It can be devastating for them to find out that they do not have permission to live in the land they call home.

Many of these youths came together and fought for passage of the DREAM Act, which would grant them a path to U.S. citizenship. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, these youth created various organizations, including United We Dream, National Day Labor Organizing Network, and the Immigrant Youth Justice League. But still Congress failed to pass the DREAM Act.

In May 2010, four undocumented youth and their legally present allies decided it was time to move beyond lobbying. They occupied the office of Senator John McCain in Tucson, Arizona, urging him to sign the DREAM Act. Three of the undocumented youth—Mohammad Abdulahi, Yahaira Carrillo, and Lizbeth Mateo, along with legal resident Raul Alcaraz—were arrested. This was a huge risk for these youth, as they could have been deported after being arrested, but fortunately for them, they were released the following day.

Since then, undocumented youth activists have continued to organize sit-ins and other actions to demand their right to stay in this country. In addition to sit-ins, they have organized to fight against deportations on a case-by-case basis. For example, Rigo Padilla was arrested for driving under the influence in January 2009. The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, along with other organizations, held rallies and circulated petitions against Padilla's deportation. In August 2009, he was granted a reprieve from deportation (Puente 2009). Immigrant rights organizers have successfully prevented the deportation of hundreds of people through similar actions.

Undocumented students from around the country demand passage of the DREAM Act despite the threat of arrest and deportation.

In 2012, DREAMers were able to successfully pressure President Obama into providing deferred action and work permits to undocumented youth. In June 2012, the president issued the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) memorandum, which protects youth from deportation

for two years. To qualify, undocumented immigrants must have been under the age of thirty-one on June 15, 2012; have arrived in the United States before the age of sixteen; and be currently enrolled either in school or in the armed forces or already have completed high school. At the time DACA was issued, the Migration Policy Institute estimated that there were 1.76 million eligible youth and that 85 percent were Latin American, 9 percent were Asian, and about 6 percent were from other parts of the world (Batalova and Mittelstadt, 2012). The passage of DACA was a significant victory for the immigrant rights movement, yet it still left activists with a lot of work to do. DACA applied only to a small portion of undocumented people; it left DREAMers' parents in the same situation and was viable for only two years.

Although candidate Donald Trump had promised to end DACA as one of his first steps he would take as president, as of April 2017, he had not done so. Because DACA is an Executive Order, Trump or any subsequent president can revoke DACA with the stroke of a pen. The struggle for the rights of DREAMers and other undocumented migrants thus continues.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 14.2: Struggles for Racial Justice

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Racial Justice and Empathy

These stories of communities fighting for their rights are inspiring. Why don't we hear about more of them? How can we stand by in good conscience as people are losing their homes, being unfairly incarcerated or deported each year, or being shot by police officers and security guards without cause? In many cases, we allow these things to happen because we think that the people who face these extreme circumstances brought it on themselves. Undeniably, the majority of people who come into contact with the punitive arm of the state are Black or Latinx and working class or poor. Yet many middle-class White Americans believe that this country is fair, in part because they themselves are shielded from injustice.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. When people in the United States hear that the father of three children was deported, many respond that the person was here illegally and should have known better. People who make such pronouncements tend to imagine this father to be a Mexican man. What would happen if they imagined a White man? What if a White woman heard that her sister's husband, who came to the United States when he was five, was facing deportation because he allowed his visa to lapse? Would she have more empathy? What if you heard your uncle was going to jail for twenty years because he had been charged with marijuana possession for the third time? What if the first charge occurred when he was eighteen, the second when he was twenty-two, and the third when he was forty-five? How would you feel if it happened to you or someone close to you? What if you heard that your sister was going to jail for ten years because she threatened her abusive husband with a shotgun in order to escape from her home?

Once you are capable of imagining that something like foreclosure or outrageous medical bills or incarceration or deportation could happen to you or someone like you, it is a lot easier to see how unjust our laws are. However, if you think that these things only happen to "people like them" or irresponsible people or criminals, you might not see our justice system as problematic. Racism is an ideology that makes us believe that some people are less worthy than others. Can we imagine a society in which all human life is valued equally?

In the final Voices sidebar in this section, Opal Tometi, co-founder of #BlackLivesMatter, shares her reflections on justice through leadership lessons. She encourages us to take stock of our history—to face our past and to learn from it. Throughout this book, you have learned about many types of racial injustice. What will you do with that knowledge?

VOICES

Three Leadership Lessons from Opal Tometi

Opal Tometi, co-founder of #BlackLivesMatter, shared these reflections with the 2016 graduates of the University of Arizona, her alma mater.

Lesson #1: **Take Stock of Your History**

Graduates, I encourage you to embrace your history, have the courage to glean the aspects of it that were positive and of use—values that you'd want to nurture so that they would blossom in your own life. We must have the courage to face our past, some of which we'll find is positive and some negative. There are terrible histories that you may want to distance yourself from—like the killing and displacement of indigenous peoples, the kidnapping and enslavement of people of African descent, the internment of Japanese people and so on—but it's your responsibility to know and learn from that history. Whether we like it or not, we are the products of it. Each of us inherits certain privileges, beliefs, and resources, and unless we do the work of examining our past, distilling the values, choosing the ones we want and deliberately discarding the others we know don't serve humanity—we'll find ourselves repeating the same errors of the past. And instead of feeling guilty about the past or the privilege, it is more meaningful to be accountable to it, learn from it and choose which side of history you will be on. I hope you'll join me and choose the side of freedom.

Opal Tometi.

Lesson #2: **Don’t Fear Obstacles; They Are Opportunities**

Not too long ago, there was anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim rhetoric being circulated in everyday conversations and throughout the media. There was talk of new laws that would infringe on people’s ability to access basic services, threats to LGBTQ rights, increased surveillance of Muslims. There was a terrible war going on and stories of civilians and children being brutalized and killed. There was hysteria surrounding all of this, and it all seemed to peak with an impending election. There were many candidates, but only two received the most attention. And there was one candidate in particular who many thought couldn’t win; yet despite all odds, this candidate was triumphant. His victory seemed to defy all logic.

I was in shock in 2004 when I learned that George W. Bush was reelected into office. I was equally disturbed by the violent, immoral laws and bankrupt values that were being proposed by our “leaders” at the federal, state and local level. I had seen it firsthand because I worked actively on the campaign to defeat Proposition 200, a piece of legislation that would further disenfranchise undocumented immigrants—people I believe to be the most noble and courageous beings on our planet—people who are so in touch with their inherent human dignity, and that of their families, that they flee dire situations, brave scorching deserts, and perilous waters—in order to have a chance at a better life. So, as a student in 2004 I was dismayed that Prop 200 passed.

I literally thought this had to be the bleakest moment in Arizona and US history! The gorgeous community of friends I had acquired, and the communities from around the world I had learned about through my history books, seemed to be insignificant after the 2004 election, like their lives did not matter. I felt defeated. Until one day, as I wiped away the tears, I began to see more clearly. I realized I didn’t need to sit through any more classes; I just needed to get out into the world and begin the work. I saw an opportunity to graduate early and engage the world.

I turned my second major into a minor and wrote my capstone project, a social history of women in Kosovo.

Now, please do not misconstrue the intent of this story. It’s not a political fable because in my view standing for human rights and justice should not be partisan. I share this story of my coming-of-age to illustrate that everyday people have power, too. We cannot hand over our agency to those with official titles. For me, the 2004 election was catalytic. And so my second lesson to you, dear Wildcats, is not to fear obstacles but to see them as opportunities.

Lesson #3: **Create + Live a New Story**

And this leads to my third and final leadership lesson—and it's derived from my early use of social media. It was a campaign to demand that Channel 3 stop using the term "illegal" to describe undocumented people.

I had become passionate about the use of language in a history class I had taken on the Holocaust, where I learned that genocide didn't happen overnight. It was gradual and seemingly ordinary. And it began with language about Jewish people, and their value in the world. I was determined to apply the knowledge from my class to the current context. So I invited my friends on [social media] to call the news station and demand they stop using pejorative language in their reporting. The term ["illegal" as a noun] is both insensitive and downright negligent. Reporters were behaving as if immigrants were not living, breathing human beings, whose lives actually mattered. Stories of ranchers and Border Patrol Agents contaminating or even emptying bottles of water left in the desert for migrants as they crossed proved to me the gravity of the issue. These actions were despicable and potentially deadly. And our everyday, seemingly ordinary language gave permission to that.

I was determined to apply my history lesson to write a new future. One where no one would be so dehumanized that they could be deemed illegal and disposable. And that's why I launched [this early social media] campaign. A version 1.0 of online social justice organizing meant to impact real lives offline. And this same logic led me to partner with two other organizers to co-create the Black Lives Matter platform and chapter-based network. A sort of 2.0 version of organizing! This campaign and now movement has demanded an end to anti-blackness and an end to the dehumanization of Black people, capturing the hearts and minds of millions and mobilizing people of conscience across the globe. We were not only determined to write a new story but live a new story so that we could have a world where one day all lives would finally matter.

You too are equipped with some of the most transformative knowledge to create a new world. Your degrees have

disproportionally gifted you with the tools to be social architects. You have the capacity to imagine and build an entirely different world. One where we finally have a functioning, vibrant democracy that works for all of us, where the breadth of our human experience and the beauty of our spirits are embraced and we are all able to thrive. Your knowledge can do tremendous good and also tremendous ill. There is nothing inconsequential about being alive in this moment in history and possessing the type of information you have. But here's the clincher—you must apply the lessons you have learned here ethically, and with heart.

You are each called to lead with courage and with grace—knowing that it's a gift to be alive in this moment—and your being here is no mistake. Future generations will judge us for what takes place during this pivotal time in US and World history. And in a time full of uncertainty—one thing is certain—we need you to lead. And here's how: (1) take stock and be accountable to your history; (2) see the obstacle and seize the opportunity; and (3) write and live a new and better story!

Source: Tometi 2016.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 14.3: Racial Justice and Empathy

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Moving Beyond Race

Racism is just one of many forms of oppression that are interlocking and pervasive. Thus, some scholars argue that a singular focus on racism is insufficient to achieve racial justice. Institutionalized racism is a system of social control, yet this system interlocks with other systems of social control and domination, and racial injustice cannot be addressed in isolation.

Intersectional Analyses: Race, Class, Gender

In the 1980s and 1990s, scholars began to focus increasingly on the connections among race, gender, and class. These scholars of **intersectionality** argued that racism, sexism, and classism cannot be studied independent of one another. Instead, we need to focus on how forms of oppression intersect. A scholar of intersectionality would argue that the forms of oppression experienced by a working-class, Black lesbian will be different from those faced by Barack Obama, for example. These two very different people will confront different forms of oppression and will experience their blackness in different ways because of how their statuses interact with one another. An antiracist agenda designed to help people like Barack Obama may do little or nothing for working-class or poor African Americans.

Sociologist Zulema Valdez (2011) argues that the social structure in the United States is composed of three interlocking systems of oppression: capitalism, patriarchy, and White supremacy. **Capitalism** produces inequality through a profit-based system. **Patriarchy** is a system of oppression that ensures male dominance in terms of power and property.

White supremacy is a system of racial stratification that places White people at the top of the hierarchy. Valdez (2011), following the work of Patricia Hill Collins (2004), contends that these three systems are interdependent and that we cannot understand one system of oppression without looking at the others.

In 1991, Kimberlé Crenshaw published a foundational article on intersectionality arguing that this framework is necessary to understand the experiences of women of color who have survived domestic violence. In her study of women in a Los Angeles shelter, Crenshaw (1991) found that the women who seek protection are usually poor. Their poverty is in part a result of limited opportunities for women of color. They end up at the shelter because they are fleeing domestic abuse and also because their poverty means they cannot afford to go elsewhere. Women with financial means at their disposal do not end up at the shelter. In general, women's experiences of domestic violence are linked to patriarchy, and the state's response (or lack thereof) is related to racism. In sum, to understand why women of color are overrepresented in domestic violence shelters, we must look at this issue through the lenses of race, class, and gender. Alone, each of these frameworks provides us with a more limited understanding than an intersectional framework can.

The focus of most intersectional work is analytical; it thus helps us understand how racism works in conjunction with other forms of oppression. However, this body of work leaves open the question of how racial justice looks from an intersectional perspective. Do we need to dismantle patriarchy to fight racism? Do we need to undo class oppression to achieve racial justice? How might we do that?

An intersectional framework could be used to critique the reparations perspective. The argument would be that since the disadvantaged status of African Americans, for example, varies by gender, class, and sexuality, any approach to reparations must take these distinctions seriously. Otherwise, the approach risks reproducing patriarchy and capitalist inequality.

Racism and Capitalism

The consideration of intersectionality brings us to questions about capitalism's role in racial inequality. Is it possible to eradicate racism without eradicating capitalism? Is racism a necessary component of capitalism?

The other side of this question is: How would capitalism look without racism? What if everyone in the United States, regardless of racial status, had an equal chance of being rich, middle class, or poor? Would that be racial justice? Even in that scenario, with so many poor people in the United States, millions of non-White people would continue to be poor. Millions of people would still lose their homes and be homeless. Is it even possible to eradicate racism without eradicating capitalism? Or, as Michelle Alexander (2010) argues, would another system of social control emerge to justify enormous inequalities?

Arizona resident Leslie Evans wipes tears from her eyes as she talks about what it is like to be stuck in the cycle of domestic violence. An intersectional framework can shed light on why women of color are overrepresented in domestic violence shelters.

Chapter 14.2 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

It is clear that racism and class oppression are connected. For example, African Americans are disproportionately represented among the poor. In this sense, racial oppression is in large part—though not exclusively—a question of class oppression.

West Indian historian Eric Williams famously wrote in 1944 that "slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery." Both Williams (1944, 6) and Audrey Smedley (2007) argue that racism arose from the exploitative relationships of colonialism, slavery, and capitalism. In this historical sense, racism cannot be separated from capitalism. Racial divisions among workers continued well after slavery. In the 1880s, White Californians used racial vitriol to protest against Chinese workers. In the 1930s, divisions between Black and White workers prevented unions from forming and demanding fair wages and benefits for all. In the 1960s, racial divisions in the civil rights movement weakened the movement. It is conceivable that without racism, some other ideology would have arisen to justify inequality and to prevent the working class from uniting to promote its own interests. However, it is also clear that racism has been detrimental to all members of the working class.

Racism in this country has evolved over time, from codified racial disparities to the color-blind racism that predominated during the Obama presidency to the rise of neo-Nazism today. Similarly, capitalism has

changed from merchant and industrial capitalism to the neoliberal and global capitalism of today.

Racism is simultaneously a system of oppression and a set of ideologies. When we think about how to overcome racism, we have to keep this dual character in mind. Racism needs to be rooted out at the ideological, psychological, and systemic levels. These processes have to be concurrent —they can't happen separately.

Let's think about this concretely: Is it possible for us to have a society free of racism in which all of the gardeners are both underpaid and Latino men? If we worked extremely hard to rid people of biases without changing the system, it seems that plan would backfire because new ideologies (or the same old ones) would emerge to explain the racially unequal system. Conversely, if we fought to rid the world of racial inequalities and yet did nothing to work against deeply held racist beliefs, it would be hard to maintain racial equality. If people continued to think that Black men are lazy, employers would continue to be less likely to hire them for jobs. In this simplified version, you should be able to see that the ideologies and practices of racism work together.

Our society is remarkably unequal. Racial disparities are enormous: Black and Latinx families have just 5 percent of the wealth of White families. Overall disparities are also staggering: 1 percent of Americans own nearly half of the wealth in this country (Norton and Ariely 2011). In the context of massive overall inequality, it makes no sense to ask questions about the utility of fighting against racism without paying attention to the economic inequalities created by capitalism. Even if there were no racial disparities in income and wealth, millions of people of color in the United States would still be poor. Globally, billions of non-White people would continue to be poor because of the extent of global inequality.

At the same time, perhaps racism is what permits this massive inequality to exist. Perhaps a world without racist ideologies would inherently be a more equal world. Perhaps the devaluation of Black lives is what makes it

possible for the United States to have the largest prison system in the world. Perhaps the devaluation of Arab lives is what made the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan possible.

What do you think? Is racism integral to capitalism, or can we root out racism without fundamentally changing the economic structure? Would a battle against racism necessarily create less economic inequality? What about a battle against patriarchy? Do these battles have to be fought in conjunction? These are big questions, but we do not have to answer them before moving toward racial justice.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 14.4: Moving Beyond Race

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Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter raises more questions than it answers. This is because there is neither a clear-cut path toward racial justice nor a unified vision. Racism is a scourge on our society, yet it is so deeply entrenched that seeing a way out of it is difficult. However, activists and everyday people continue to fight for racial justice in many ways.

Some people advocate for civil disobedience in response to particular racial injustices, as we have seen in the stories in this chapter. Others contend we need to work in the legal arena. Still others argue we need a new Constitutional Convention. Some activists are fighting for reparations, while some are advocating for a complete overthrow of the systems of White supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy.

What do you think? What is your vision for racial justice? Do you see a place for yourself in the struggle?

Finally, we can reflect on the fact that racial oppression affects each of us differently. Nevertheless, racial divisions among Black, White, Asian, Latinx, and Native American people are harmful to all of these groups. No matter your social location, you can fight against mass incarceration, mass deportation, school closings, and predatory lenders. You can fight against the fear and loathing that make these problems so widespread. And you can fight this fight because winning it will create a better society for all.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 14.5: Conclusion and Discussion

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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

14.1 What does racial justice look like?

- Three main perspectives on racial justice are reparations, civil rights, and human rights. Each perspective has its benefits and limitations.

Review

» What are the steps toward racial justice that Yamamoto (2009) outlines? Give examples of each.

» What are the differences between civil and human rights?

Critical Thinking

» What do you think of the suggestion for a new Constitutional Convention? What are some issues that such a convention might address?

» Does racial justice look different for various groups? In what ways?

14.2 How can we achieve racial justice?

- Communities can achieve victories in the fight for racial justice by coming together.

Review

» Why is the struggle for legalization of immigrants a question of racial justice?

Critical Thinking

» What activist tactics do you think are most effective for securing racial justice, and why?

14.3 What is the connection between racial justice and empathy?

- Achieving racial justice is especially challenging when people lack empathy.

Review

» What is empathy?

Critical Thinking

» What is the role of White Americans in the struggle for racial justice?

» Is racism harmful to White Americans? Why or why not?

14.4 Why is a singular focus on racism insufficient to achieve racial justice?

- Race intersects with other forms of oppression; these interlocking oppressions must be taken into account in any attempt to achieve racial justice.

Review

» What is the relationship between racism and capitalism?

» How is intersectionality relevant to racial justice?

Critical Thinking

- Is it possible to achieve racial justice in a capitalist society? Why or why not?
- How does racism affect different racial groups in distinct ways, and what does that mean for racial justice?

Talking about Race

Empathy requires recognizing that other people might feel differently than you do. For example, it is hard for some people to understand why many African Americans are deeply offended by the usage of imagery such as nooses and chains—objects that hearken back to slavery. It can also be hard for White people to understand why some Halloween costumes are racist. During the Halloween season of 2013, some White people dressed up as Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman. In one instance, a young man painted his face black, wore a hoodie with a bloodstain on it, and was carrying Skittles in one hand and iced tea in the other. How can consideration of racial empathy inform a conversation about potentially offensive Halloween costumes?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 14.6: Check Your Understanding

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LIST OF KEY TERMS

Capitalism

Civil rights

human rights

intersectionality

Patriarchy

racial justice

Recognition

Reconstruction

Reparations

Responsibility

White supremacy

15

Thinking Globally

Race and Racisms in France, South Africa, and Brazil

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

Nelson Mandela. Werner Opitz. (*dieKleinert/Alamy Stock Photo*)

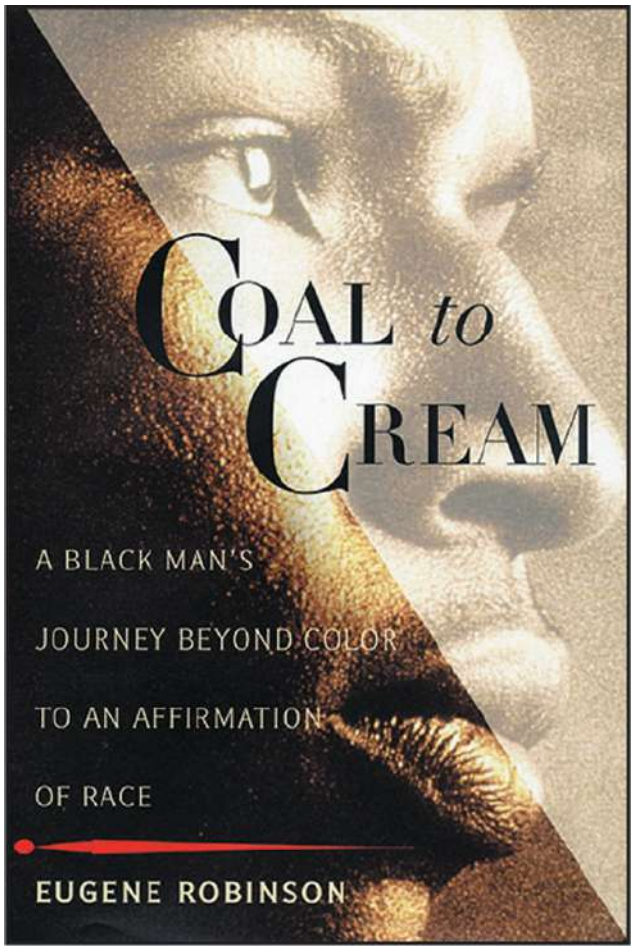
As You Read

15.1 How do other countries differ from the United States in racial dynamics?

15.2 In France, what are the effects of the government's insistence on not recognizing racial categories?

15.3 In South Africa, how does the legacy of apartheid affect racial dynamics?

15.4 In Brazil, how does the government-promoted idea of a racial democracy affect race relations?



When journalist Eugene Robinson traveled to Brazil, he had trouble figuring out who was Black and who was White. To find out, he asked other people. The answers were not always what he expected. He describes many of these interactions in his book *Coal to Cream*.

These weren't trivial questions. I could see that there were black people in Brazil, just like in the United States, and white people, although the proportions were obviously different. I knew that there had been a history of slavery and eventual emancipation. And yet I had the sense that the way people here thought of race was not at all the same way I thought of it. Even among my group at the beach, with the range of skin tones and hair types pretty much covering the whole spectrum, there was none of the obvious discomfort I had often felt whenever race came up in a mixed group in

the States, none of the paralyzing fear of saying the wrong thing. Still, I wasn't making much sense of the inconsistent and contradictory things I was hearing. Race was important; race was trivial. There were tons of black people in Brazil; no, there really weren't that many. I wasn't getting it.

I decided to give up on theoretical classification and focus instead on the concept of race relations, which I figured would translate more easily. I turned to my colleague's Brazilian girlfriend, whose name I recall as Velma, and asked what it was really like being black in Brazil.

She answered with a look of genuine surprise.

"But I'm not," she said. "I'm not black."

She smiled at me as one smiles at a child who just doesn't understand, an isn't-he-precious kind of smile. But then I saw her quickly glance around at the others, making eye contact, and I had the sense she was somehow seeking to validate the declaration she had just made.

Velma had been born more than a thousand miles away, in the poor northeastern part of Brazil, the equivalent of our Deep South—a place where a plantation economy once flourished, where millions of African slaves had worked the fields, where slavery had persisted a full generation past the end of the American Civil War. It was obvious to me at first glance that Velma was primarily a descendant of those slaves. There was a lot of Indian in her, but mostly African. She was a small woman with long jet-black hair, flaring nostrils, high cheekbones, and brown skin at least a couple of shades darker than mine. It wasn't even a close call, in my book. But she was telling me she wasn't black.

I blurted out, "But you must be, Velma. I'm black, and you're as dark as I am."

She put her arm next to mine, to compare: Yes, she was darker. Positively, definitively darker.

> "But this color isn't black," she said. "This isn't black at all."
>
> Trapped on what she clearly saw as the wrong side of the color line I was trying to draw, Velma maintained flatly that as far as she was concerned, I wasn't really "black" either. I explained that in the United States I certainly was and always would be, and that so, in fact, would she. Velma found this hard to understand, and certainly wasn't about to accept it. She allowed that I might not be "white," but insisted that at the very least I fit well within the ill-defined parameters of *pardo*, which roughly means light-brown-skinned. "Black" was for her more of a description than a group designation, and it meant people with skin much darker than mine.
>
> Or, of course, hers.
>
> *Source: Robinson 1999, 11–13.*

In this excerpt, we see how Robinson struggles to come to terms with the fact that while he may see Velma as "Black," she disagrees. As we have read throughout this book, race is a social construction. People are not born "Black" or "White." Instead, people label each other as "Black" or "White" according to social conventions. It is thus possible for Robinson to perceive Velma as Black while she herself does not, and it would be inaccurate to say that one of them is right and the other wrong. The exchange between the two is an example of how racial categories can be constructed differently in different places.

In fact, one of the best ways to grasp how racial ideologies work is to examine racial ideologies in distinct locales. In this chapter, we will compare the United States with France, South Africa, and Brazil. Through these comparisons, we will see how distinct ideologies and practices can be deployed to achieve similar outcomes—the dominance and privilege of one group over others.

How do Other Countries Differ from the United States in Racial Dynamics?

The United States has a unique racial past—one that includes the genocide of Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans, mass repatriation of Mexicans, and the denial of citizenship to Asians. Additionally, the United States implemented a formal segregation system for several decades in the early twentieth century. The legal history of segregation in the United States differentiates it from many countries, with the notable exception of South Africa. The idea of race is important in the United States. However, this idea was not invented here. Instead, as we learned in Chapter One, the idea of race emerged from the oppressive systems of colonialism, slavery, and European expansion. These systems had a global impact, and concepts of Whiteness and Blackness exist in each place touched by them. The countries examined here—France, South Africa, and Brazil—each had unique dynamics of colonialism and slavery, and these dynamics influenced the racial ideologies that evolved in them.

Today, France, South Africa, Brazil, and the United States have distinct racial makeups. In the United States and France, people of African descent are a minority; in South Africa, they are a majority; and in Brazil, people of African and European descent are about equal in number. These distinct racial demographics have played a role in the evolution of racism and interracial relations in each country (Marx 1996).

Brazil and South Africa have, in some ways, histories that are polar opposites. Brazil's self-identity has historically been one that celebrates racial mixing and upholds the idea of a racial democracy. In contrast,

South Africa formed its national identity on a legacy of **apartheid**—legally enforced racial segregation—and banned racial mixing. However, both countries have undergone significant changes in recent decades. South Africa ended apartheid in 1994 and now proclaims itself a "rainbow nation," a country that embraces its diversity. Brazil has recognized the persistence of racial inequality and has instituted racial quotas to increase the numbers of Black and Brown people who can attend university (da Silva 2006, 2012).

France has historically maintained a color-blind stance, meaning that anyone, regardless of skin color or place of birth, can become French. The country distinguishes officially only between French nationals and foreigners. People are either French or they are not—ethnic categories such as Martinican French or Senagalese French are not legally recognized in France. Unlike the United States, France does not collect official data on the racial self-identifications of its residents.

France has no history of official segregation or of denial of citizenship to people based on their race. In the colonies, African subjects who attained a certain social status were permitted to become French citizens. There were no laws that prevented Africans from becoming French because of their ancestry. France also transformed some of its colonies into overseas departments (similar to states) of the French Republic. In 1946, for example, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion, and French Guiana became overseas departments. People born in these places hold French citizenship. Despite an official rhetoric of equality, however, French people of African and Arab descent continue to be socially and economically marginalized both on the mainland and in these overseas departments.

Mourners sing outside the home of former South African president and anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela following his death in 2013. Even after the end of apartheid, tremendous inequality has persisted in South Africa.

Apartheid has finally been dismantled in South Africa, yet tremendous inequality persists even without official barriers in place. In this respect, South Africa is similar to other countries that maintain racial inequality through entrenched practices instead of laws. Apartheid nevertheless shapes how South Africans understand racial inequality. Graziella Moraes Dias da Silva (2012) found that South African Black professionals often attributed continuing racism in the post-apartheid era to competition for economic resources—which was one of the main reasons for instituting the apartheid system. One Black banker in South Africa told her that racism is "about resources." He, like many other Black South Africans, argued that racism is a strategy to ensure that White people continue to hold political and economic power. Moraes Dias da Silva contrasts this assessment with racial dynamics in Brazil, where the absence of a recent history of official racism has created a situation in which Black people are more likely to blame history or ignorance for racism and unlikely to

attribute racial inequality to institutional racism. In this way, Brazil is similar to France, where institutional racism is not recognized, even though there is a lot of evidence that people of color are treated differently than White people (Body-Gendrot 2010).

In each of these countries, people of African descent are the most likely to occupy the lowest rungs of the socioeconomic ladder. What is interesting for our purposes here is that this same outcome has been achieved through very different mechanisms, although a colonial legacy is a common factor. These distinct mechanisms have, in turn, created a unique brand of racial discourse and racial inequality in each place.

The United States, Brazil, and South Africa were all colonized by European powers. In contrast, France was a significant colonial power in its own right. The vast majority of immigrants in France come from France's former colonies. In Brazil, laws and customs set in place during the colonial period continue to negatively affect people of African descent. In South Africa, colonialism can be seen as a precursor to apartheid, which continues to influence racial inequality today. In the United States, the idea of freedom invoked in the struggle for independence from England was limited to White men, and this creed continues to affect the nation today. As we will see, each country has a unique history, yet racial inequality and race-based subordination are constants.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 15.1: How Do Other Countries Differ from the United States in Racial Dynamics?

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Race and Racism in France

France established colonial ventures in the Caribbean, North Africa, Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. During the mid-1700s, the French were involved in the capture and transport of nearly half a million slaves from Africa to the Antilles—Haiti, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. The French participated in the slave trade until slavery was abolished in French colonies in 1848. The end of the slave trade, however, did not mean the end of French interests in Africa.

French Colonies in Africa

In 1854, a Frenchman, Louis Léon César Faidherbe (1818–1889), was appointed governor of Senegal, marking the establishment of the French empire in sub-Saharan Africa. As the French army continued its march across Africa, it named governors of each territory it claimed, including Sudan, Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. Together, these countries formed the French West African Federation, which was founded in 1895 and headquartered in Dakar, Senegal. Later, Chad, Togo, Niger, Mali, Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, and Cameroon were brought under French control (McNamara 1989) (Figure 15-1).

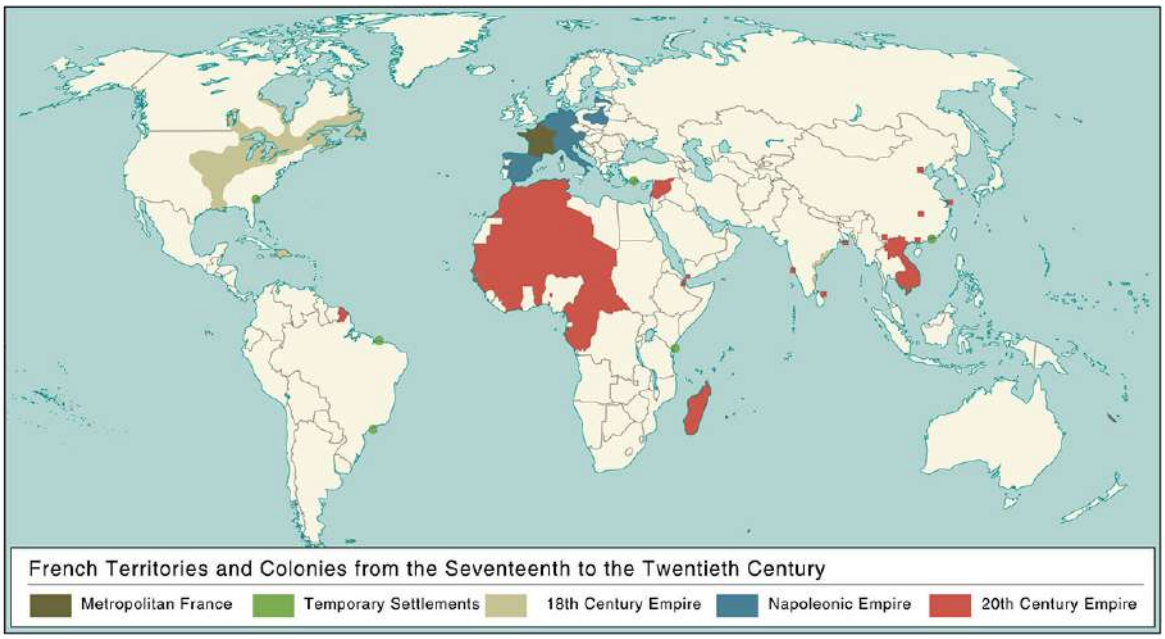

FIGURE 15-1 French Territories and Colonies from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century

The French designated Africans as subjects rather than as citizens. One reason for this is that many French people viewed Africans as too primitive to be able to fully exercise their rights as citizens. In 1912, France passed a law that permitted educated, property-owning, and taxpaying African subjects to become French citizens. This law applied, however, to only a very small percentage of African subjects.

The French justified their forcible acquisition of African lands by asserting that these were civilizing missions, designed to uplift inferior races. Their stated goal was to liberate and civilize Africans. The French viewed Africans as backward and stuck in traditional ways, and they justified their takeover of African lands as part of their mission to modernize the continent. To this end, the French developed schools that taught Africans hygiene along with basic reading and writing skills. These schools also taught African children to speak French (Conklin 1998).

The French colonial empire in Africa endured until 1960 (McNamara 1989). The end of this empire was also the beginning of a large-scale migration of sub-Saharan and North Africans to France—primarily to

work in the low-skill, low-wage sector of the labor market in large urban areas.

The French Antilles

French interests in the Caribbean were initially related to the cultivation of sugarcane for export. To this end, the French brought hundreds of thousands of African slaves to the Caribbean. With the end of the slave trade, French interests in the region shifted. The French developed public schools in the Antilles much earlier than in Africa, beginning in the 1880s. In these schools, French teachers taught children in Guadeloupe and Martinique how to be French. Many of these Antillean children were later sent to the African colonies as military and state officials of the French empire (Grosfoguel 1999).

People from the French Antilles may travel to mainland France freely, as they have French citizenship. However, Antilleans did not begin to migrate in large numbers until the early 1960s, when many traveled to mainland France to work in the French public service. Today, nearly half a million first- and second-generation migrants from the Antilles reside in France—more than the entire population of Martinique (400,000) (Fleming 2012).

Although Antilleans were given access to public administration jobs in France, they have encountered a glass ceiling: even with proper qualifications, they rarely receive promotions to higher levels of government. Moreover, with the shrinking of the French government in the 1980s and 1990s, second-generation French Antilleans did not have access to the same public administration jobs as their parents did (Grosfuguel 1999).

African Immigration to France

Prior to 1974, people who lived in former French African colonies were able to travel freely to France, through what has been called the open-door policy. Most of these African migrants were men who traveled to France in search of temporary labor. However, after the end of the open-door policy in the 1970s, more migrants decided to settle permanently in France, fearing they would not be able to return (Sargent and Larchanché-Kim 2006).

In the 1970s and 1980s, France passed a series of restrictive immigration laws. The new laws had two primary unintended consequences: (1) they encouraged migrants to stay instead of engaging in temporary labor migration, and (2) clandestine migration networks emerged. The 1974 laws ended temporary labor migration, yet allowed for family reunification. As a result, more families migrated permanently to France to join their husbands and fathers. As immigration laws tightened, many immigrants were transformed into undocumented or clandestine immigrants. In France, undocumented migrants call themselves ***les sans-papiers***: those without papers (Sargent and Larchanché-Kim 2006). About 10 percent of the 61 million people who live in France are foreign-born, and only a small percentage of these immigrants are undocumented. This situation is distinct from the one that exists in the United States, where, in 2013, nearly a quarter of immigrants were undocumented.

A demonstration for the regularization of undocumented migrants (*les sans-papiers*) in Paris, France.

Discrimination and Racial and Ethnic Inequality in France Today

The outskirts of French cities—called ***banlieues***—are, in many cases, underserved neighborhoods that are home to minority populations. Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy often commented on the undesirability of immigrants, especially North Africans, who, he contended, do not wish to become French. For example, just before the uprisings of the immigrant community in October and November 2005, Sarkozy referred to immigrant youth in the *banlieues* as "*racaille*" (*scum* or *rabble*, a word with racist connotations).

Many *banlieues* consist of public housing built in the 1970s to accommodate immigrant families. The *banlieues* continue to house primarily immigrants, people from overseas departments, and their

children. These immigrants come primarily from North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and the French Antilles (Body-Gendrot 2010). Today, over half of France's immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa and Tunisia live in public housing, as do about 40 percent of the nation's immigrants from Morocco and Tunisia and 40 percent of mainland residents from the overseas departments (Pan Ké Shon 2009).

The term *banlieues* could be translated as *suburbs*. However, these neighborhoods have more in common with inner cities in the United States than with suburbs, as their inhabitants are primarily poor or working class and mostly non-White. In some *banlieues*, the unemployment rate is as high as 40 percent—similar to the rate in some inner cities in the United States. Police harassment is endemic, and police officers routinely ask residents to show their papers.

In late October 2005, these suburbs burst into rebellion across France in response to high unemployment, poor schools, and police harassment (Murray 2006). The unrest lasted for twenty-one days. The uprisings, triggered by the death of two young men who were electrocuted while hiding from the police, spread across France to 250 towns and cities. Three weeks later, nearly 3,000 people had been arrested and 9,000 cars had been set on fire. The police responded with a show of force, using tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber bullets. The vast majority of those who rioted were young second-generation immigrants in the *banlieues*. The 2005 rebellions are part of a long history of uprisings in the *banlieues*, often in response to police violence (Body-Gendrot 2010).

It is difficult to be sure how much racial or ethnic inequality there is in France because, by law, the state cannot collect systematic data on race or ethnicity (Body-Gendrot 2010). The reluctance to collect such data emanates from the state's entrenched denial that race and ethnicity are important in France. However, over the past few years, a few studies have provided empirical support for the claim that people of African and Arab descent are marginalized in France. For example, some studies have reported that immigrants from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, as

well as mainland residents from overseas departments, have fewer educational opportunities than the majority population. The children of immigrants from North Africa are less than half as likely as their counterparts with French parents to have a high school diploma (Brinbaum, Moguérou, and Primon 2010).

Unemployment is also higher for minority than for majority populations. In France, 81 percent of the male majority population is employed. The employment rates are similar for immigrants but not for their children. The rates are much lower for second-generation male immigrants than for the majority population: only 53 percent of second-generation sub-Saharan Africans and 61 percent of second-generation Moroccans and Tunisians are employed (L'Hommeau, Meurs, and Primon 2010). Overall unemployment for French university graduates is 5 percent, but 26 percent for North African university graduates who live in France (Murray 2006).

Chapter 15.1 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

VOICES

Justice for Theo

France has been rocked by tensions that flared up over a police officer allegedly sexually assaulting with a truncheon a 22-year-old Black man called Theo in the Parisian suburb of Aulnay-Sous-Bois. This brutal aggression is the latest police violation to dominate headlines in French mainstream media and to trigger protests against police brutality.

Protestors in Paris in 2017 hold a banner reading “Justice and Dignity/Stop Police Impunity.”

Theo was on his way to visit a friend when the police stopped him to check his ID. A video of Theo’s violent arrest by the police [that] circulated on the internet shows him on the ground against a wall, being beaten by four policemen. In his account to the media, Theo explained how he fell face down as police spat racist insults and

sodomised him with a police baton during the brutal arrest. The French police called the violent assault “an accident.”

Theo was subsequently treated in hospital. His case triggered protests in several Parisian suburbs which at times turned into riots. Protesters and the police clashed, notably in the suburban town of Bobigny, where cars and buses were burned and stores were ransacked.

At this stage, the French Court of Justice is looking into how to assess the nature of the assault against Theo and whether it should be considered rape or an act of violence. This, according to the court, can be established only by determining the nature of the perpetrator’s intention at the time of the incident.

The French Penal Code reserves a harsh punishment for rape. Article 222-23 of the law states that: “Any act of sexual penetration, whatever its nature, committed against another person, through violence, constraint, threat or surprise, is a rape. Rape is punishable by 15 years of imprisonment.”

A conviction of rape and a jail sentence for the policeman could be considered by Theo’s family a victory and satisfy people’s demands for justice. But if the policeman is acquitted, a repeat of the 2005 riots—triggered by the deaths of two teenagers during a police chase—is highly probable. ….

In April 2009, Amnesty International published a report denouncing the French police violations and the failure of the French justice system to put an end to such acts. “Police ill-treatment, racial abuse and excessive use of force continues while procedures for investigating such allegations are still failing to meet the standards required by international law.”

But neither the Amnesty International report nor the French court rulings nor the denunciations of the French civil associations could put an end to the phenomenon. The French police continues to justify its abuses with the lack of human and material resources, as if respecting individuals’ human dignity is somehow associated with material resources and/or the number of policemen on the ground.

An acute crisis of confidence has long existed between the inhabitants of suburban neighbourhoods and the French state that almost always manifests its presence in the suburbs only through its police force. Such a dynamic automatically transforms its relationship with French citizens of the suburbs into a purely authoritarian one.

As Amar Henni, a leading youth worker in the district of La Grande Borne on the southern outskirts of Paris, told *The Guardian*: "the biggest unresolved problem is the relationship between youth and police. The state took a security approach, rather than a social or education response."

Therefore, in the absence of a genuine policy on integration and urban development in these "sensitive urban zones" (as designated by the French administration), where unemployment is more than twice the national rate and where schools have a high turnover of often inexperienced teachers, and as long as the successive governments refuse to acknowledge their responsibility for this social failure, without real commitments and changes, unfortunately riots and cars and shops set on fire will continue to occur every time the police commits such horrible acts.

When state violence becomes systematic and rarely punished, the society falls into a vicious cycle where violence only triggers more violence. The case of Theo is a natural outcome of the failure of the state—on all levels—to combat racism and discrimination and to put an end to police violence and abuses against the inhabitants of the suburbs.

Source: Saad 2017.

Minority populations are also more likely to report having poor health. Immigrant men are 30 percent more likely than native-born French men to report bad health. Immigrant women are 80 percent more likely. These health disparities are in large part the result of the lower socioeconomic status of immigrants (Pan Ké Shon and Robello 2010).

Very few data are available on racial profiling by police in France. However, in one study, researchers recorded the racial or ethnic status of each person stopped by police in train stations, as well as the status of each person who walked by. They found that people who appeared to be of Arab origin were stopped 7.8 times more than those who appeared to be White and that those perceived to be Black were 6 times as likely to be stopped. Black and Arab youth who wore particular clothing styles were the most likely to be stopped. When the researchers presented the French police with these findings, the police denied that racial profiling was going on. The French police agreed that the disparities existed but responded that they are instructed to stop anyone who appears to be involved in youth gangs and that the police were therefore just doing their job (Body-Gendrot 2010).

The question of discrimination has finally begun to be discussed in the public arena in France. A European Union survey conducted in 2019 found that 74 percent of people in France believe that ethnic discrimination is widespread, and 56 percent reported that there was employment discrimination based on skin color or ethnic origin. Although they believed discrimination was widespread, 90 percent of respondents reported they personally would feel comfortable interacting on a daily basis with a Black person. Three percent of people however, reported that they would be uncomfortable in that situation (Eurobarometer 2019). Another study found that 53 percent of French men and 60 percent of French women believe that people in France frequently experience discrimination on the basis of their skin color or immigrant origin. At the same time, 78 percent of people born in an overseas department reported that they had experienced discrimination on the basis of their skin color, as did over 80 percent of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa. Eighty-five percent of Algerians reported having faced discrimination on the basis of their national origin, as did 87 percent of Moroccans and Tunisians (Brinbaum, Moguérou, and Primon 2010). In an ethnographic study with forty-five children of North African immigrants in Paris, Jean Beaman (2019) found that many of her

interviewees recognized that, although technically they were French because they were born in France, people of European descent often viewed them as foreigners due to their visible non-Whiteness. They thus struggled with this duality—where they consider being French as part of their identity—yet also recognize that many of their compatriots do not see them as French. A recognition of the implicit Whiteness in "French-ness," as well as a recognition of the discrimination faced by non-Whites in France, will be the first step toward creating a more just society in France.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 15.2: Race and Racism in France

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Race and Racism in South Africa

South Africa has a well-known history of legally sanctioned segregation and continued White racial dominance. Although people of African descent were, and remain, a majority of its population, Europeans were able to subjugate the native Black population and subject it to repressive racial domination for centuries.

Colonialism in South Africa: The British and the Dutch

Europeans first arrived in South Africa in the seventeenth century. This first group was primarily Dutch and settled in what became the Cape Colony. Their descendants began to call themselves ***Afrikaners*** (*Africans* in Dutch) and slowly developed their own language, culture, and identity distinct from those of their ancestors in Holland. Eventually, however, Britain set its sights on the Cape Colony as a viable trading point at the southern tip of Africa. In 1806, the British took control of the Cape Colony from the Afrikaners, transforming it into a British colony. The Afrikaners were resistant to British rule and opposed to what they viewed as the more liberal racial policies of the British. Thousands of Afrikaners trekked out of the Cape to the north of South Africa, where they established their own republics in the 1850s. However, the discovery of diamonds in those republics in 1877 and of gold in 1886 meant that the British were no longer content to allow the Afrikaners to control the north. The British desire to control the lands of the Afrikaners, who had become known as the Boers, led to the Boer War.

Also called the Second War of Freedom, the **Boer War** (1899–1902) was waged by the British to bring all of South Africa under its colonial power

so that Britain would have access to South Africa's mineral wealth. The Afrikaners fought hard for their independence and control over their land but eventually lost. Following the end of the war, the two British colonies (Cape and Natal) merged with the two Boer republics (Transvaal and Orange Free State) to create a unified South Africa in 1910. South Africa would remain a British colony until 1961.

The Apartheid Era (1948–1994)

After the costly British victory in the Boer War, the British had good reason to desire reconciliation with the Afrikaners. The Afrikaners asked the British to create policies excluding the native Africans from positions of power to ensure their own upward mobility. In 1936, the South African government removed native Africans from the voting rolls. In 1948, the government imposed apartheid, which was devastating to native Africans but brought socioeconomic success to Afrikaners. The proportion of Afrikaners working in white-collar jobs more than doubled between 1946 and 1977, from 29 to 65 percent (Marx 1996).

Apartheid was a system of formal, legal racial segregation that endured from 1948 to 1994 in South Africa. Under this system, interracial sex and marriage were prohibited, and residential segregation by race was mandated. With the 1950 Group Areas Act, almost one million people were forcibly removed from where they lived because the government declared those areas to be exclusive to White people. Segregation was enforced in all areas of life: housing, hospitals, transportation, education, and public facilities such as beaches and parks. Under apartheid, White children were afforded the best educational opportunities and soon were able to secure the best employment options, both because of their education and because of enforced segregation. Blacks were largely blocked from educational opportunities that would lead to economic success (Seekings 2008).

With the advent of apartheid, every South African citizen was obliged to register as a member of an officially designated race. However, it was not always clear-cut whether South Africans were White, "**coloured**," or natives. Prior to 1948, racial status had a contextual quality: people with some African descent were sometimes classified as White if they had lived among White people most of their lives, and people with no European descent could be designated as coloured if they were educated and of a certain class status. In 1950, the Nationalist government passed the **Population Registration Act**, which mandated that every citizen be issued an identity document specifying his or her race as White, native, or coloured (Posel 2001).

The Population Registration Act defined three racial groups in South Africa:

> *A white person is one who in appearance is, or who is generally accepted as, a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a coloured person.*
>
> *A native is a person who is in fact or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa.*
>
> *A coloured person is one who is not a white person or a native.* (*Posel 2001, 102)*

The category "Indian" was later added in reference to people of South Asian ancestry, and "native" was replaced by the labels "Bantu" and "Black." The South African definitions of race were social definitions; they did not depend exclusively on ancestral or physical characteristics. Instead, White people were those who were socially accepted as White, Black people were those accepted as native Africans, and all the rest were coloureds. With apartheid, many people who had been socially accepted as White were designated as coloured by the South African government and forced to move from the White-only neighborhoods in which they were living. Apartheid was designed in part to ensure White racial purity. However, most South Africans knew it was very difficult for any White South African to be sure that his or her ancestry did not include any non-White people (Posel 2001).

Under apartheid, South Africa was divided into four provinces and ten rural homelands. White people lived in the provinces, along with Asians, coloureds, and some Black people. The vast majority of Black people were relegated to the economically marginalized homelands, which constituted only 13 percent of the land area of South Africa and offered very few economic opportunities for their residents. The average unemployment rate in the homelands continues to be about 75 percent (Özler 2007). For this reason, many Black families rely on remittances from other family members who work outside the homelands and send money home.

Sign designating outdoor space for White people only. South Africa, 1976.

Chapter 15.2 Video

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

From the 1950s to the 1980s, many Black South Africans who had formerly lived in the provinces were forcibly relocated to the homelands. The provinces contained the best economic opportunities, and their mortality profiles and rates of infectious diseases were similar to those of middle-income countries such as Brazil or Mexico. By contrast, the homelands looked more like the much poorer neighboring countries in southern Africa such as Zimbabwe (Burgard 2002).

During the 1970s and 1980s, South Africa began to see mass mobilizations in opposition to apartheid. In 1990, these mobilizations, combined with international pressure, led the government to announce its intention to end apartheid (Marx 1996), which it finally did in 1994.

The fight to end apartheid in South Africa was long and bloody and was waged on both domestic and international fronts. During the 1960s and 1970s, South Africans, inspired by Ghandi, engaged in peaceful protests and civil disobedience. One of the most well-known protests is the Soweto uprising. On June 16, 1976, South African students in Soweto took to the streets in a peaceful protest against apartheid and educational inequality. Their protest was met with extreme police violence: police shot and killed hundreds of schoolchildren. The violent response to this youth-led protest galvanized youth activists across the county. Activists from the Black Consciousness (BC) Movement, led by Steve Biko, and the African National Congress (ANC), founded by Nelson Mandela, began to intensify their anti-apartheid efforts. In 1977, Biko was arrested because of his political activity. He was beaten and tortured during his detainment, and died as a result. As state repression ramped up, so did the opposition. During the 1980s, mass mobilization against apartheid intensified both in South Africa and around the world. For example, in 1988, 155 universities and colleges in the United States had fully or partially divested themselves from South Africa, putting serious financial pressure on the country. These decades of struggle finally bore fruit when apartheid was officially ended in 1994 (Knight 1990; South African Democracy Education Trust 2004).

VOICES

South African Coloured Identity

When asked about his racial identity, Xam, a father, mechanical worker, and part-time DJ in South Africa, reflected: “Nobody sat me down and said, ‘We are coloured because we are this.’ It was never like that.” But he did recall one influential experience when the concept of race became meaningful in his life.

He was a young boy attending elementary school in a primarily coloured township, Mitchells Plain, in South Africa in the late 1970s. Demonstrations against the repressive, white minority, apartheid government were becoming more common across the nation. During one particularly heated struggle, Xam recalls that his “school was teargassed by accident, supposedly” by the police.

Xam raced home to find his mother, a school teacher, hiding older kids who had been part of the demonstration. “And, um, that evening, my mother *had* to have that conversation.” Xam said that her approach was careful, that she did not want to instill hate in him, but that she did explain: “*at the moment, in this country, we are not seen the same as other people*.”

After that day, Xam began to put things together thinking, “Okay, the complexion of the people that are chasing me—is not the complexion that I have, so, obviously I came to that on my own, you know.” He recognized that he, as a coloured South African, looked, talked, and experienced life differently from the white officers who came into his community. Whereas many in his community lived in crammed spaces and lacked access to resources like safe schools and reliable transportation, the white officers arrived in shiny police vehicles and commanded power in all interactions. Xam not only realized differences between his race and theirs, but also learned that the officers’ group was considered “right” and was afforded power and privileges that members of his own racial group were not.

As he shared: “I was born into racism. I was born into the apartheid system.”

Given the apartheid goal of complete separation of the races, most people in Mitchells Plain were coloured, defined by apartheid legislation as “a person who is not a white person or a native [black].” Throughout apartheid, the coloured group was mainly viewed as a people who had racial mixture in their lineage, but also included anyone who could not fit into the black or white category, such as people of “Malay” descent who were brought to the Cape as slaves from Southeast Asia.

It was resisting the white Afrikaners in power that taught Xam of his coloured identity and also about a broader collective identity as South Africans of color. “We needed to unify so that we could fight one enemy” Xam explained. Many South Africans felt similarly to Xam and joined the United Democratic Front (UDF), which was launched in 1983 in Mitchells Plain. The UDF swelled to over three million multiracial members and was a largely successful organizer against the apartheid state. With internal civic action and external pressures from international states and agencies, the apartheid system began to crumble.

Finally, in 1994, South Africa held its first election by universal adult suffrage. A majority of South Africans voted for Nelson Mandela, a black African and former political prisoner and candidate supported by the African National Council (ANC), securing his victory as the president of the new Republic of South Africa. Since then, the ANC has remained in power. The end of apartheid represented a shift from an oppressive, white, minority-led system, to a black, majority-led democratic system. Race continues to shape individual life experiences, but there are now clear protections against discrimination on the basis of race.

However, this transition in power has once again complicated the ways many coloureds think about race and their place in the new South Africa. As Xam explains, “the so-called coloured people feel that they have been betrayed. They feel that they gave their lives.

They gave their futures for the liberation struggle, and they were sold out." Despite their action against apartheid, many coloureds feel they have been left out of the transition of power. Coloureds today continue to suffer, with low levels of educational attainment, high rates of unemployment, and poor health outcomes.

Still frustrated with the plight and position of coloureds, Xam is one of many who are seeking to redefine what it means to be coloured today. Xam would like greater recognition of the Khoikhoi, the indigenous South Africans to whom many coloured people trace their roots.

Often called Bushmen, the Khoikhoi were the first to interact with the Dutch in the Cape. Many coloureds believe that identifying as Khoikhoi further distances them from the legacy of apartheid and better solidifies their rights to land and resources in South Africa. Xam is now prepared for another fight: "This is who I am. This is who I need to be. This who I need to live like, and I need to stand for that. Because, you know what? On this planet is enough space for me to be me. And if you're not gonna allow me for that space to be me, I'm gonna fight you for that space to be me."

Source: Pirtle 2017.

The Persistence of Inequality in the Post-Apartheid Era

Although apartheid was dismantled, racial inequality has not been eradicated. Racial segregation is no longer legally enforced, but it continues in schools and residential areas. About 15 percent of African students and a larger percentage of coloured and Indian students are enrolled in previously White schools. Meanwhile, White students have not enrolled in formerly Black schools, which remain exclusively Black and primarily underprivileged (Moodley and Adam 2000).

A discussion of inequality in South Africa would be incomplete without mentioning the AIDS epidemic. About 17 percent of adults aged fifteen to forty-nine in South Africa are HIV positive—one of the highest rates in the world. The AIDS epidemic is both raced and gendered: the majority of people with HIV are African women (Morrell, Jewkes, and Lindegger 2012).

One of the most notable changes since the end of apartheid has been the rise of an African middle class. Today, in South Africa, nearly all poor people are of African descent, as are most of the working class, and the middle and upper classes include White as well as African-descended people. The rise of Black people into the middle class was accomplished by providing better educational opportunities as well as by enforcing affirmative action policies. For example, the 1998 Employment Equity Act required midsized and large private employers to set and enforce diversity targets (Seekings 2008). Still, in 2010, 28 percent of Black people in South Africa were unemployed, compared with 5 percent of White people (Morrell et al. 2012).

South Africa's 2012 census revealed that racial inequality continues to be a problem. Over three-quarters of South Africans are Black, and they earn, on average, about one-sixth of what White people earn (Figure 15-2).

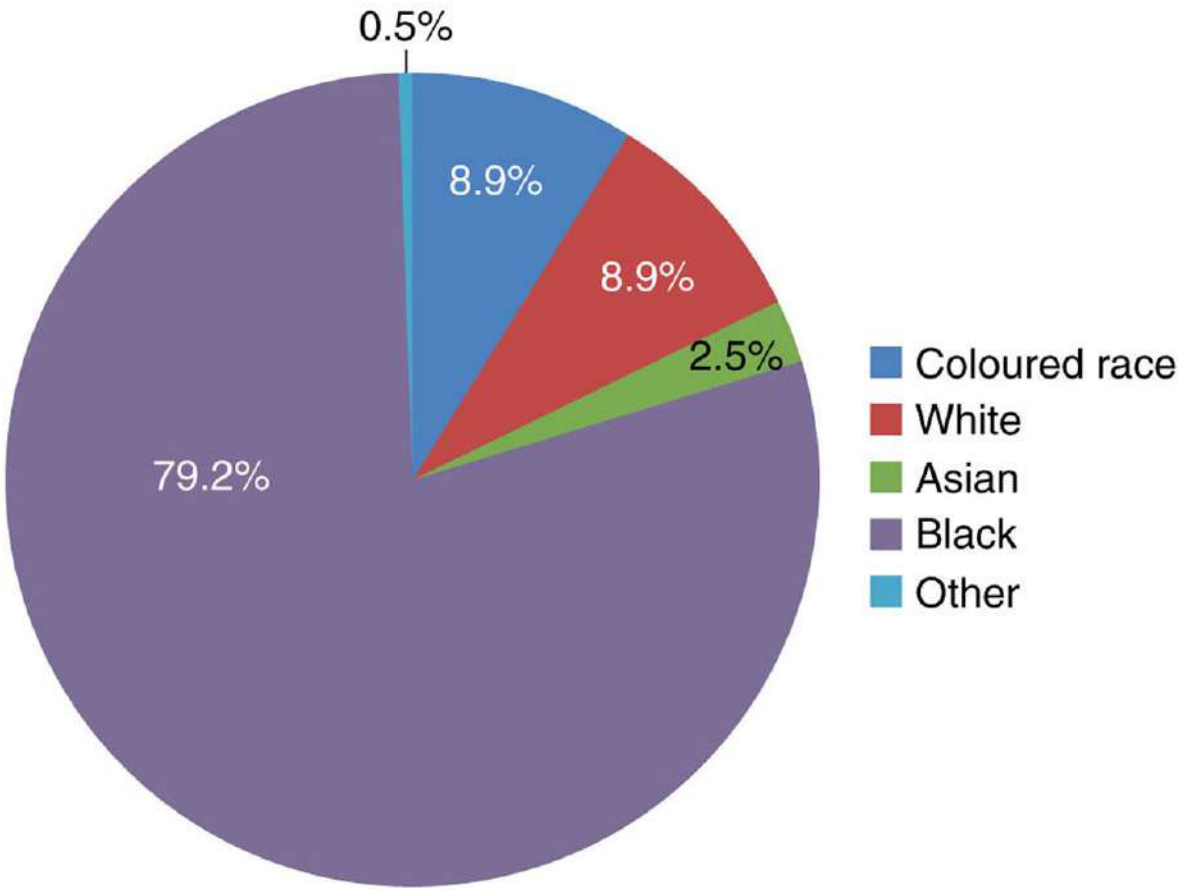

FIGURE 15-2 South Africans, by race, 2011 Source: South African Census (2011).

The end of apartheid has meant the end of absolute White racial dominance in South Africa. However, the country continues to be tremendously unequal, and a disproportionate number of Black people remain at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. The end of apartheid in South Africa has actually led to more overall inequality. The country's Gini coefficient—a measure of inequality on a scale of 0 to 1 (see Chapter Nine)—increased from 0.5 in 1995 to 0.73 in 2005 (Morrell et al. 2012), and then decreased to 62.5 in 2013. To achieve a more just society, South Africa will have to address both race and income inequality.

RESEARCH FOCUS

The Politics of White Youth Identity in South Africa

With the dismantling of apartheid, many exclusively White schools in South Africa opened their doors to Black and coloured children. Sociologist Nadine Dolby was curious about how White students experienced and talked about this transition. To find out, she conducted research at Fernwood High School in Durban, South Africa, in 1996.

Under apartheid, Fernwood was a White government school. In 1991, it opened its doors to Black and coloured pupils. By 1996, over 60 percent of the students were Black, 7 percent were coloured, and about 3 percent were Asian. Whites constituted only 30 percent of the student body at that point, and many of the White students as well as the White teachers were not happy about the rapid transition. Most of the White students would have left the school if they could have, but they had not done well enough academically to get into the more prestigious and Whiter public schools in Durban.

Dolby found that White students at Fernwood, similar to those in the United States, use the discursive phrase "I don't want to sound racist, but …" when talking about Black people in South Africa. In interviews, White students often described how Black people were violent toward White people. However, these students supported their accounts with stories of violence they had seen in the media or heard about through their friends. Dolby reported that when the White students told these stories, they positioned themselves and other White people as morally superior and not prone to similar acts of violence.

Dolby contended that White students are scared of Black violence as well as Black economic prosperity. White students come from families that have been able to do well financially because of the privileges traditionally associated with Whiteness in South Africa.

However, ending apartheid has meant that White people no longer have a monopoly on the labor market. Thus, even though White people continue to experience privilege in South Africa, they do not have the enormous economic advantage their parents had.

One White student told Dolby: “It is hard to get used to seeing so many Black people now having big cars, now having good clothing.” Another White student claimed that many Black people are homeless but have expensive cars. Others commented on the flashy fashion styles of Black students. As White students struggled to understand their own loss of economic security, they claimed that Black people do not know how to spend money wisely. These claims give them moral authority and a sense of righteousness.

Dolby explained that the Whiteness with which White South Africans at Fernwood identify is not so much a South African but a global Whiteness. These students listen to music produced in other countries and dream of one day emigrating to a country where, they perceive, White people still have the upper hand.

For Discussion

1. Do you think there are parallels between White South Africans and White people in the United States?
2. Do you think that White people in South Africa experienced fear after the abolition of apartheid?
3. How do you think the end of apartheid affected Black students in South Africa?

Source: Dolby 2001.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 15.3: Race and Racism in South Africa

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Race and Racism in Brazil

Both Brazil and the United States were once inhabited by an indigenous population and later colonized by Europeans who brought African slaves with them. In addition, both countries experienced large waves of immigration from Europe and Asia after the emancipation of their African slaves. Yet Brazil differs dramatically from the United States, as well as from South Africa, in that it never instituted formalized legal segregation. Similar to France, Brazil has invoked a particular brand of nationalism—"We are all Brazilians"—to deny the possibility of racial inequality in the country.

Portuguese Colonization and the Slave Trade in Brazil

The history of race and racism in Brazil begins with the landing of the Portuguese in 1500. Soon afterward, Portuguese colonists began to capture members of the indigenous population and force them to work on sugarcane plantations. The brutal treatment of indigenous Brazilians, combined with diseases brought over by the Portuguese, quickly decimated the native population. The Portuguese therefore turned to African slaves as an alternative labor force. By the time the slave trade ended in 1850, over three million Africans had been forcibly brought to Brazil as slaves. Brazil was the last country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery, ending it in 1888 (Telles 2004).

Very few Portuguese women lived in Brazil during the time of slavery, and not surprisingly the Portuguese men there frequently engaged in consensual and nonconsensual sexual relations with African, indigenous, and mixed-race women. As a result, large numbers of mixed-race children

were born in Brazil. When slavery ended in 1888, the population was overwhelmingly non-White (Skidmore 1993).

Whitening through Immigration and Intermarriage

Believing that White people were superior to other racial groups, the leaders of Brazil came up with a plan to promote European immigration in the aftermath of slavery. The Brazilian government paid European immigrants' passage to Brazil, with the goal of whitening the country. In the four decades after emancipation in 1888, more than two million European immigrants arrived in the city of São Paulo alone, nearly a million of whom had had their passage paid for by the national government (Andrews 1991, 54).

North American and European intellectuals lamented Brazil's large non-White population and predicted a dim future for the country. In response, Brazilian intellectuals developed their own idea of racial progress. This new ideology put forth racial mixture as Brazil's hope for the future. Brazilian elites believed that White genes were stronger than Black or indigenous genes, and that intermarriage between White people and other groups would lead to a gradual whitening of the country. Through intermarriage, Brazil would be able to progress from Black to mulatto to White (Skidmore 1993).

Brazilian intellectuals accepted European ideas of White superiority but rejected the notion that racial mixture was problematic. They argued that Brazil was becoming a White nation through a process of racial mixing, called ***mestiçagem***. Sílvio Romero (1851–1915), one of Brazil's foremost literary critics of the late nineteenth century, proclaimed the ***mestizo***—an individual with a mixed Black, White, and indigenous background—to be the prototypical Brazilian and the person best suited to Brazil's tropical

climate. Like other Brazilians, Romero predicted that racial mixture would lead to Whiteness.

Many Brazilian thinkers embraced this whitening theory (Eakin 1985; Skidmore 1993). At the same time, scholars such as the lawyer and historian Oliveira Vianna (1883–1951) demonstrated that the White population was increasing. Comparing the 1872 and 1890 censuses, Vianna argued that White people had increased from 38 to 44 percent of the Brazilian population, while Black people had fallen from 20 percent to less than 15 percent (Skidmore 1993). Vianna contended that the whitening project was working and that Brazil would eventually be a whitened nation.

This self-appraisal as a whitening nation was accompanied by the rise of some individuals of African descent into the elite, including the writer Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839–1908) and the scientist Juliano Moreira (1873–1932). Some prominent Brazilians saw racial mixture as acceptable insofar as it was a temporary waypoint on the road to racial whitening. Others, such as Octavio Domingues, argued that the success of some mulattos was proof that constructive miscegenation (racial interbreeding) was viable and that mulattos were not inferior to White people (Stepan 1991). Whereas in the United States, miscegenation was prohibited, in Brazil, it was encouraged. Elite Brazilians supported interracial marriages, and darker Brazilians sought out lighter partners with the intention of having lighter children (Twine 1998).

The celebration of *mestiçagem* became the hallmark of Brazilianness and reached its apex in the work of Gilberto Freyre (1900–1987), a Brazilian social historian. Freyre published his book *Casa Grande e Senzala* in 1933. This book described Brazil as a thoroughly racially mixed country. However, instead of arguing that Brazil's mixture began with slavemasters forcing themselves on African slaves, Freyre argued that the mixture was a result of the natural attraction between Black people and White people. He took this mixture as evidence of racial democracy in Brazil, a country he saw as free of the racist legacies that one could find in

the United States. Freyre argued further that the racial mixture between Brazilians meant that there were no racial groups in Brazil and thus no racial discrimination. Freyre and other writers compared Brazil favorably with the United States and Nazi Germany and argued that Brazil's **racial democracy** should be a model for the world (Twine 1998). A racial democracy is a society in which color and ethnic differences do not affect life chances.

The Racial Democracy Myth in Brazil and Affirmative Action

The myth of Brazil's racial democracy attracted international attention. In the 1950s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sponsored several research projects designed to reveal Brazil's secret to its racial harmony. To their surprise, this funding led to a series of published works that debunked Brazil's supposed racial democracy and showed that, to the contrary, racial inequality was pervasive in the country. These studies revealed disparities in education, income, and health among Black, Brown, and White Brazilians.

Racial inequality in Brazil continues to be pervasive. In 1999, Black people accounted for 45 percent of the total population but 64 percent of the nation's poor. In 2003, only 2 percent of the deputies in the national congress identified as Black, and none of Brazil's ambassadors were Black. In that same year, the average income for White Brazilians was Rs1480, compared with Rs780 for Black and mixed Brazilians. By 2013, the average income for White Brazilians was Rs2097, compared with Rs1213 for Black and mixed Brazilians—proportionately almost the same as in 2003 (Nolen 2015).

In the early 2000s, state policy on race in Brazil changed dramatically. The government shifted from denying the existence of racial inequality to admitting that racism was a problem and instituting affirmative action

policies as a form of redress. At the national and state levels, policymakers introduced racial quotas; notably, three states approved laws that reserved 40 percent of university admission slots for Afro-Brazilians (Htun 2004). By 2013, a majority of Brazil's federal and state universities, which are attended by over three-quarters of Brazilian students in public higher education, used a quota system to determine acceptance. The quotas are based on race and class and mandate that a certain percentage of the university entrants must be Black, Brown, or indigenous, or have attended public secondary schools. In contrast to public education, however, there are very few affirmative action policies in the employment arena in Brazil (Telles and Paixão 2013).

A *favela* (slum) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with luxury buildings beyond.

Scholars such as Stanley Bailey (2009), Robin Sheriff (2001), and Donna Goldstein (2003) maintain that the ideal of racial democracy in Brazil,

though not an accurate depiction of reality, is a crucial part of Brazilian society. They argue that racial democracy is a utopian ideal to which Brazilians aspire. Bailey (2009) argues that most Brazilians recognize the existence of societal racism. Yet, because they uphold racial democracy as an ideal, Black, White, and Brown Brazilians are all supportive of anti-racist organizing and race-specific policies such as affirmative action. In the United States, most Black people recognize the prevalence of racism, whereas most White people deny it. In contrast, in Brazil, White, Brown, and Black people all recognize the pervasiveness of racism in fairly similar proportions. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, only 7 percent of White people and 3 percent of Black people reported that there was no racial prejudice in Brazil (Bailey 2009). A study in São Paulo revealed that 67 percent of White people and 67 percent of Black people agreed that there was discrimination against non-White people in Brazil (Bailey 2009).

Bailey (2009) found that Brazilians of all colors support race-targeted policies similar to affirmative action. However, he also reported differences in the level of support for such policies: 46 percent of White Brazilians support university quotas, compared with 63 percent of non-White people. This difference is much less stark than that in the United States, where 30 percent of White people versus 80 percent of Black people support university quotas that favor the admission of Black applicants (Bailey 2009).

VOICES

Brazil's Color Bind

When Daniele de Araújo found out six years ago that she was pregnant, she set out from her small house on a dirt lane in the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro and climbed a mountain. It is not a big mountain, the green slope that rises near her home, but the area is controlled by drug dealers, so she was anxious, hiking up. But she had something really important to ask of God, and she wanted to be somewhere she felt that the magnitude of her request would be clear.

Daniele de Araújo and her family.

She told God she wanted a girl, and she wanted her to be healthy, but one thing mattered above all: "The baby has to be white."

Ms. de Araújo knows about the quixotic outcomes of genetics: She has a white mother and a black father, sisters who can pass for

white, and a brother nearly as dark-skinned as she is—“I’m really black,” she says. Her husband, Jonatas dos Praseres, also has one black and one white parent, but he is light-skinned—when he reported for his compulsory military service, an officer wrote “white” as his race on the forms.

And so, when their baby arrived, the sight of her filled Ms. de Araújo with relief: Tiny Sarah Ashley was as pink as the sheets she was wrapped in. Best of all, as she grew, it became clear that she had straight hair, not cabelo ruim—“bad hair”—as tightly curled black hair is universally known in Brazil. These days, Sarah Ashley has tawny curls that tumble to the small of her back; they are her mother’s great joy in life. The little girl’s skin tone falls somewhere between those of her parents—but she was light enough for them to register her as “white,” just as they had hoped. (Many official documents in Brazil ask for “race and/or colour” alongside other basic identifying information.)

Daniele de Araújo with Jonatas dos Praseres and their daughter, Sarah Ashley: Her family “congratulated me,” she says, when they first met her future husband, “because I was lightening the family, right? It felt like I was doing some great thing.” Still, she prayed that Sarah Ashley be born light-skinned.

Ms. de Araújo and Mr. dos Praseres keep the photos from their 2005 wedding in a red velvet album on the lone shelf in their living room. The glossy pictures show family members of a dozen different skin colours, arm in arm, faces crinkled in stiff grins for the posed portraits. There are albums with similar pictures in living rooms all over this country: A full one-third of marriages in Brazil are interracial, said to be the highest rate in the world. (In Canada, despite hugely diverse cities such as Vancouver and Toronto, the rate is under five per cent.) That statistic is the most obvious evidence of how race and colour in Brazil are lived differently than they are in other parts of the world.

But a range of colours cannot disguise a fundamental truth, says Ms. de Araújo: There is a hierarchy, and white is at the top.

Many things are changing in this country. Ms. de Araújo left school as a teenager to work as a maid—about the only option open to a woman with skin as dark as hers—but now she has a professional job in health care and a house of her own, things she could not have imagined 15 years ago. Still, she says, “This is Brazil.” And there is no point being precious about it. Black is beautiful, but white—white is just easier. Even middle-class life can still be a struggle here. And Sarah Ashley’s parents want her life to be easy.

Brazil’s history of colonialism, slavery and dictatorship, followed by tumultuous social change, has produced a country that is at once culturally homogenous and chromatically wildly diverse. It is a cornerstone of national identity that Brazil is racially mixed—more than any country on Earth, Brazilians say. Much less discussed, but equally visible—in every restaurant full of white patrons and black waiters, in every high rise where the black doorman points a black visitor toward the service elevator—is the pervasive racial inequality.

Brazil’s experience stands in marked contrast with the way those issues are playing out in the United States. A mass shooting like that in Charleston, S.C., allegedly carried out by a white supremacist, would be unimaginable here. So would a speech by the president calling on the country to confront its racial inequality. What happened to Rachel Dolezal—a blue-eyed white woman who chose to pass as black, and was pilloried—is equally alien to Brazil, where racial identity is always fluid, and has been wilfully subsumed into questions of colour. Many Brazilians, of all races, contrast their own country favourably with the U.S., where the discussion of racism is overt and often angry.

Yet discrimination is every bit as powerful a force in Brazil, and it exacts a high price here, too. This cost takes obvious forms (for example, the disproportionately huge number of young black men in prison) and more subtle ones, such as the conversations that Ms. de Araújo and Mr. dos Praseres have about their daughter, and whether she is white “enough.”

But there is change afoot here, as well: It is sluggish, may prove to be transient, and is certainly fragile. But for all that, it is happening, through both institutional reforms and personal choices. In the process, it is calling into question centuries-old constructions of identity, and offering people such as Ms. de Araújo whole new ways of imagining their lives.

Source: Nolen 2015.

Racial Categories in Brazil Today

Brazil has often been contrasted to the United States in terms of racial labeling. The traditional thinking has been that Brazil has many racial categories, whereas the United States has only a few; that racial identity in Brazil, but not the United States, alters as one moves up socially; and that race relations in Brazil are more harmonious than in the United States. Furthermore, the thinking has been that brown Brazilians receive privileges that Black Brazilians do not, whereas in the United States Brown and Black people are lumped together. Over the past twenty years, each of these assumptions has been either completely disproven or shown to have much more nuance.

One popular comparison of Brazil to the United States involves the argument that in the United States, anyone with one drop of Black blood is Black, whereas in Brazil, people are considered Black only if they have no evidence of White ancestry. Whereas in the United States race refers to ancestry, in Brazil it has to do mostly with skin color and physical appearance. One way to characterize this difference is as genotype versus phenotype. **Genotype** refers to genetic makeup, whereas **phenotype** refers to physical appearance. Of course, these terms are related, for one's ancestry plays an important role in determining one's physical appearance. Nevertheless, a person in Brazil with a Black grandmother

who has no visible African ancestry would not be considered “Black,” but such a person could be considered Black in the United States.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Racial Ideology and Black–White Interracial Marriages in Rio de Janeiro

Scholars of race in Brazil have long argued that darker-skinned individuals in that country aspire to marry people with lighter skin with the goal of increasing their social status and having children lighter than themselves. Sociologist Chinyere Osuji was intrigued by this practice, often called "whitening," and interviewed Brazilians in interracial relationships to find out what they think about whitening.

Osuji interviewed twenty-five married couples composed of one Black and one White partner. None of the Black partners told her they had married with the goal of having lighter children or attaining higher social status; rather, they cited their partner's intelligence and social skills as the qualities that attracted them. When she asked what they liked physically about their partners, none of them mentioned skin color. They found it offensive for anyone to suggest that they had married a White partner because of his or her color.

Whereas earlier studies of interracial marriages in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s showed that many Brazilians openly admitted to desiring a lighter partner, Osuji's study shows that things have changed. However, her interviewees also told her that their family members made comments about their interracial marriages. The neighbors of one White woman, for example, commented that she would have children with "hard hair" because of her marriage to a Black man. A Black woman reported that her cousins had commented that her children would be lighter because of her marriage to a White man. Although the people Osuji interviewed argued that they did not marry their partner because of his or her race, their friends and family members still saw their relationship through the lens of whitening or darkening.

Osuji observed that her research showed that there is no longer a universal aspiration for whitening in Brazil and that the

appreciation of Blackness is growing. Black–White couples in Brazil did not frame their relationships as an attempt at whitening, and they were offended by any such suggestion.

Nevertheless, the perception that lighter is better has not altogether disappeared, as evidenced by the value-laden comments from friends and family.

For Discussion

1. What has changed in Brazilian race relations? What has not?
2. Why do people marry across races? Why don't they?
3. Do you think the concept of social whitening applies to the United States?

Source: Osuji 2013.

Studies on skin color and social status have shown that skin color matters in the United States in much the same way as in Brazil. Lighter-skinned people of African descent in both countries have certain privileges that their darker-skinned counterparts do not (Monk 2016). The perception of whether a person is Black in the United States is influenced to some degree by his or her social status (Saperstein 2012). Studies of racial attitudes in Brazil have demonstrated similar findings.

Overall, Brazil *is* different from the United States, though this difference is not easily captured largely because of course neither country is static and because racial ideologies are constantly in flux in both places. This flexibility is at the heart of what makes racial ideologies so powerful.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 15.4: Race and Racism in Brazil

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

Conclusion and Discussion

In the United States and South Africa, the end of official segregation led to the growth of an African-descended middle class. In Brazil, the introduction of quotas for university admissions has contributed to larger numbers of people of African descent attaining middle-class status. In France, there is also a Black middle class, albeit a small one. In each place, the recognition of racial discrimination and attempts to do something about it have led to concessions. At the same time, the poverty profiles of large numbers of people of African descent in these countries have changed little.

In each of these countries, people of African descent have achieved positions of political and economic power. In South Africa, Nelson Mandela became the first Black president in 1994; the United States did not elect its first Black president, Barack Obama, until 2008. In Brazil, a few Black politicians have had success. In France, however, politicians of Arab or African descent continue to be notably absent. One pattern common to these three countries is that racial ideologies have changed to some degree, yet inequality persists.

In Chapter One, we saw that racial ideologies are products of the colonial encounter. Ideas of race and racism emerged to justify the enslavement of Africans and the genocide of Native Americans. We also saw how racial ideologies justified colonial endeavors in Africa. This last chapter drives home the point that 500 years later, we are still dealing with the repercussions of the colonial legacy—both in the United States and around the world.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 15.5: Conclusion and Discussion

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

15.1 How do other countries differ from the United States in racial dynamics?

- The American racial structure is just one of many possible ways in which racial hierarchies could be organized.

Review

» What are some differences and similarities in the manifestation of colonialism in France, South Africa, and Brazil?

Critical Thinking

» Pick one of the three countries discussed and explain how dominant racial ideologies there have transformed over time.

» How have racial demographics influenced racial ideologies in the countries discussed?

15.2 In France, what are the effects of the government's insistence on not recognizing racial categories?

- In France, the government does not recognize that there are disparities between French people with European ancestry and French people with African ancestry, yet these disparities are persistent and deep.

Review

» How have France's colonial endeavors influenced the racial and ethnic makeup of France today?

» What is the difference between France's former colonies in Africa and its overseas departments?

» Characterize the extent of racial and ethnic inequality in France today.

Critical Thinking

» Compare the racial dynamics in France to those in the United States. How are they different? How are they similar?

15.3 In South Africa, how does the legacy of apartheid affect racial dynamics?

- Apartheid has ended in South Africa, yet racial inequalities persist.

Review

» How was the Boer War important in the history of South Africa?

» What is apartheid?

Critical Thinking

» How was apartheid in South Africa similar to or different from the Jim Crow Era in the United States?

15.4 In Brazil, how does the government-promoted idea of a racial democracy affect race relations?

- Brazil is no longer portrayed as a racial paradise, yet it is clear that racial dynamics in Brazil are distinct from those in the United States.

Review

» What are some strategies Brazil historically used in the effort to whiten the country? Were they successful?

» What is the racial democracy myth in Brazil?

Critical Thinking

» Compare the racial dynamics in Brazil to those in the United States. How are they different? How are they similar?

Talking about Race

The discussions in this chapter make it clear that people who are perceived as Black experience marginalization in the United States, South Africa, Brazil, and France. At the same time, these four countries vary in how they define Blackness. How could you use this knowledge—that a person can be Black in the United States, coloured in South Africa, and White in Brazil—in a conversation about race and racism? What does this tell us about the social construction of race?

SELF-ASSESSMENT 15.6: Check Your Understanding

[*Please note*: You must be using an online, browser-based eReader in order to view this content.]

LIST OF KEY TERMS

Afrikaners

apartheid

banlieues

Boer War

coloured

Genotype

les sans-papiers

mestizo

mestiçagem

phenotype

Population Registration Act

racial democracy

Glossary

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

1851 Indian Appropriations Act Legislation that created reservations for Native Americans and provided funds for tribes to relocate to these communal lands.

1871 Indian Appropriations Act Legislation that declared that the U.S. government would no longer sign treaties with Native American tribes.

1882 Chinese Exclusion Act The first major piece of immigration legislation; it was overtly racist in that it specifically prohibited Chinese laborers from entering the United States.

1887 Dawes Act Legislation that forced Native Americans to give up their communal lands and claim individual ownership of their lands.

1934 Indian Reorganization Act Legislation that ended allotment and facilitated tribal self-government to a degree.

1965 Immigration and Nationality Act Legislation that put an end to the racially biased quotas set forth in the 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act and the Immigration Act of 1924. It set a universal quota of 20,000 immigrants for every country in the world.

1984 Crime Control Act An act that established mandatory minimum sentences and eliminated federal parole.

1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) A series of immigration provisions that (1) offered a legalization option for undocumented workers living in the United States and (2) imposed sanctions on employers who hired undocumented workers.

abstract liberalism The first of Bonilla-Silva's "frames" of color-blind racism. It involves using liberal ideas such as equality of opportunity or freedom of choice to explain or justify racial inequality.

acculturation A process by which immigrants adopt the behaviors and preferences of the host society.

achievement gap The disparate educational outcomes of White, Asian, Black, Latinx, and Native American people.

acting White A term used to refer to non-White people who are perceived as behaving in ways associated with White people.

adultify When a teacher or other authority figure interprets children's behavior as if they were adults.

affirmative action Policies and procedures designed to combat ongoing discrimination in schools and the workplace.

Afrikaners Descendants of the Dutch colonists who settled in South Africa.

Allotment and Assimilation Period The oppression of Native Americans that took place from the 1870s to the 1920s, when two-thirds of Native American lands were lost and indigenous children were obliged to go to federal boarding schools where they were taught to shun their native ways and languages.

Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 Legislation that imposed even more mandatory minimum sentences. Most significantly, it set a five-year mandatory minimum sentence for offenses involving 100 grams of heroin, 500 grams of cocaine, or 5 grams of crack cocaine.

Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 Act that included a five-year mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack cocaine, with no evidence of intent to sell.

anti-Semitism Discrimination, hostility, or prejudice against Jews.

Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) 1996 legislation that, among other provisions, eliminated judicial review of some deportation orders and required mandatory detention for many noncitizens.

apartheid Legally enforced racial segregation that endured from 1948 to 1994 in South Africa.

asset-based social policy Proactive policy, at either the individual or structural level, designed to help narrow the wealth gap.

assets Cash in the bank and the value of all property, not only land but also houses, cars, stocks and bonds, and retirement savings.

assimilation A process whereby immigrants lose their ethnic distinctiveness and become part of the mainstream.

banlieues The outskirts or suburbs of French cities.

beauty queue A concept explaining how sexism and racism interact to create a queue of women ranging from the lightest to the darkest, in which the lightest get the most resources.

biological racism The idea that White people are genetically superior to non-White people.

birthright citizenship Also known as *jus soli*, the concept that citizenship is determined by where one is born, not by the nationality, race, or citizenship of one's parents.

Black Lives Matter A hashtag and movement aimed at ending anti-Black racism and violence in all its permutations.

blockbusting A practice by which real estate agents use scare tactics to convince White people to sell their homes so that realtors can purchase these homes and sell them to Black people for a profit.

Boer War Also called the Second War of Freedom; a conflict from 1899 to 1902 in which the British fought the Dutch to bring all of South Africa under British colonial power.

bracero program A U.S. government program that brought in temporary workers from Mexico between 1942 and 1964.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas Landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in which the Court determined that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal and in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Butterfly A stereotype of an Asian woman who is a demure, devoted, and submissive wife.

capitalism A profit-based economic system that produces inequality.

categorical exclusion A mechanism of labor market discrimination in which an applicant is not given an opportunity to interview for a job because of his or her race.

Chinese Exclusion Act Legislation that denied Chinese laborers entry to the United States.

civil rights Government-sanctioned protections against discrimination.

civil rights movement A series of mass protests between about 1950 and 1980 aiming to achieve racial equality in law and practice.

concentrated disadvantage When the population of a neighborhood consists entirely or almost entirely of poor people.

collective Black People who are Black, as well as other groups that receive similar treatment as Black people, such as Hmong or dark-

skinned Puerto Ricans.

colonialism The practice of acquiring political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

color-blind racism An ideology in which race is not explicitly acknowledged, but individual prejudices, acts of racial discrimination, and structures of inequality work to benefit White people.

color-blind universalism The idea that we should ignore skin color.

colorism The idea that, within races, lighter is better.

coloured According to South Africa's 1950 Population Registration Act, a person who is not White or native.

controlling images Raced, gendered, and classed depictions in the media that shape people's ideas of what African Americans are and are not.

critical race theory A way of understanding the world that centers the voices of people of color, focuses on the eradication of racial oppression, and requires reflexive thinking.

cultural capital Cultural resources that offer social and other benefits.

cultural racism (Bonilla-Silva) The third of Bonilla-Silva's "frames" of color-blind racism, relying on culturally based explanations such as the idea that Black people live in poor neighborhoods because they don't work hard enough to get out of the ghetto.

cultural racism A way of thinking that attributes disadvantaged racial groups' lack of prosperity to their behavior and culture, rather than to structural factors.

cumulative disadvantage perspective A framework used to explain the increasing divergence between Black and White health outcomes that focuses on how disadvantages accumulate over the life course.

deindustrialization The process of decline in industrial activity in a region or economy that involves a shift from a manufacturing to a service economy.

diaspora A dispersion of people from their original homeland.

discrimination The practice of treating people differently.

dissimilarity index Measure that describes the extent to which two groups—such as Black people and White people—are found in equal proportions in all neighborhoods.

Dragon Lady A stereotype of an Asian woman as a sinister, crafty, and destructive seductress.

earnings gap Differences in annual earnings among groups.

embedded market A market economy embedded within interlocking systems of oppression and privilege.

enlightened racism The idea that the United States is a land of opportunity and that African Americans could do better if they only tried harder.

environmental justice Efforts to ensure the right to live in nontoxic neighborhoods, regardless of race.

environmental racism Institutional policies and practices that differentially affect the health outcomes or living conditions of people and communities based on race or color.

erotic capital A concept linking the attractiveness and sensuality of a woman to her skin color.

ethnic enclave economy Clusters of small businesses that primarily serve people of the same ethnicity and work to facilitate the success of co-ethnics.

ethnicity Group identity based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship.

eugenics The practice of controlled breeding to increase the occurrence of desirable characteristics in a population.

Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Government agency established in 1934 with the purpose of bolstering the economy and, in particular, the construction industry.

Freedom Riders Civil rights activists who rode buses in 1961 to test the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that segregation in interstate bus and rail stations was unconstitutional.

genocide The mass killing of a group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic or racial group.

genotype Genetic makeup.

Gini coefficient A measure of inequality, with 0 representing perfect equality and 100 representing perfect inequality.

global color hierarchy A worldwide system in which White (or light) skin is privileged and people—especially women—strive to become lighter.

hegemony When racial ideologies become so widely accepted that they become common sense.

hidden curriculum Underlying curriculum designed to reflect and promote the interests of the dominant class.

"Hispanic Paradox" The observation that even though Latinx people have, on average, a lower socioeconomic status than White people, they have comparable health outcomes to Whitee people.

historical construction An idea formed in a particular time and place.

honorary White People who are not considered White but can be treated as if they were White.

human capital Educational attainment, skills, and job experience.

human rights Universal rights such as access to health care, adequate housing, and education.

hypersegregation Instances of notably high levels of segregation.

hypodescent The idea that having any amount of Black ancestry makes you Black.

ideology A set of principles and ideas that benefit the dominant group.

Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA)
1996 legislation under which legal permanent residents face mandatory deportation if they are convicted of "aggravated felonies."

Immigration Act of 1917 Legislation expanding the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and denying entry to the United States for anyone coming from the "Asiatic Barred Zone," which included India, Burma, the Malay States, Arabia, and Afghanistan.

Immigration Act of 1924/Johnson-Reed Act Legislation that greatly reduced U.S. immigration from southern and eastern Europe by introducing quotas, or limits on the number of people from these countries who were allowed entry.

implicit bias Unreasoned judgmental inclinations that operate without our conscious awareness.

Indian Removal Act of 1830 Act that enabled the administration of U.S. president Andrew Jackson to use military power to displace at least 70,000 Native Americans, killing tens of thousands in the process.

individual racism When one person discriminates against another on the basis of race or ethnicity.

institutional agent A person who occupies a position of power and is able to access or negotiate resources for others.

institutional racism Policies, laws, and institutions that reproduce racial inequalities.

intelligence testing The attempt to quantify intellectual ability using scientific measures.

intersectionality A simultaneous look at multiple forms of oppression, such as race, ethnicity, class, and gender oppression.

Islamophobia Systematic marginalization of Muslims.

isolation index Measure that compares a neighborhood's demographics against citywide demographics.

Jezebel A name with biblical origins that has come to signify a stereotypically oversexed or hypersexual Black woman.

Jim Crow laws A system of laws passed in the late 1800s denying non-White people equality.

Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 Legislation that made passports and visas a requirement for entry to the United States and established national-origin quotas for European immigrants. The act was overtly racist in that it was designed to increase the Nordic population in the United States and put a stop to the growth of other groups.

legal permanent resident A foreign national who is granted the right to remain in the United States and who will be eligible for naturalization after a period of three to five years.

les sans-papiers Literally, "those without papers"; undocumented migrants in France.

life-course perspective A framework used to explain how health outcomes change over the life course.

Mammy A stereotypical image of a Black maid.

McCarran Internal Security Act A 1950 U.S. law designed to combat Communism. It required members of the Communist Party in the United States to register with the federal government, and it allowed for the deportation of foreign nationals who were members of the Communist Party.

meme An idea, image, video, or phrase that spreads in a culture.

Mendez v. Westminster A 1947 California federal circuit court case ruling that segregating Mexican American children was unconstitutional.

mestiçagem The Portuguese word for racial mixing.

mestizo A Latin American classification of people of European and indigenous ancestry.

minimization of racism The fourth "frame" of color-blind racism, suggesting that discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting life chances for people of color.

"model minority" myth The stereotype that Asians are the racial minority group that has "made it" in the United States.

mulatto The progeny of Black people and White people; a class of mixed-race people who are darker than White people but lighter than Black people.

multiracial A person whose parents identify with different racial groups.

nativism The presumed superiority of native-born citizens, favoring the allocation of resources to them over immigrants and promoting a fear of foreign cultures.

naturalization The process whereby people become citizens of a country where they do not have birthright citizenship.

naturalization (Bonilla-Silva) The second "frame" of color-blind racism, which permits people to explain racial phenomena as if they were natural.

Naturalization Law of 1790 The first piece of U.S. legislation relating to the foreign-born, stating that only free White persons who had lived in the United States for at least two years were eligible for citizenship.

neoliberalism The ideology that open markets, liberalized trade, and privatization are the keys to economic success.

new racism An ideology in which it is not acceptable to make overtly racist statements, yet racial inequality persists.

Nuremberg Code Policy adopted by the U.S. Department of Defense in 1953 under which research subjects have to be informed that participation is voluntary and be provided with information about the nature, duration, and purpose of the research.

Operation Wetback Massive roundups of Mexicans by the U.S. Border Patrol from 1950 to 1954.

oppositional culture Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu's (1986) thesis that Black children receive signals from both the White and Black communities that lead them to reject schooling as a route to success.

Oriental Exclusion Act 1924 legislation that expanded the Chinese Exclusion Act and prohibited most immigration from Asia to the United States.

outsourcing The practice of moving jobs once held by Americans overseas, where cheaper labor can be found.

pardo A Brazilian census category meaning racially "Brown."

patriarchy A system of oppression that ensures male dominance in terms of power and property.

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)
1996 legislation that denied government services and benefits to legally present migrants.

phenotype Physical appearance.

pigmentocracy A society in which Black, Asian, and Latinx people have different social statuses according to their skin color.

Plessy v. Ferguson 1896 U.S. Supreme Court decision in which the Court determined that state laws requiring racial segregation in public facilities were constitutional, as long as they were "separate but equal."

Population Registration Act 1950 act that defined three racial groups in South Africa—White, native, and coloured—and mandated that every citizen be issued identification specifying his or her race.

predatory lender A pawnshop, payday lender, or check cashing service that charges very high fees and interest rates.

prejudice The belief that people belong to distinct racial groups with innate hierarchical differences that can be measured and judged.

prison-industrial complex The vast network of prisons, jails, courts, police officers, and other elements that purport to reduce the amount of criminal activity in our society.

pseudoscience Beliefs or practices appearing to be scientific but not based on the scientific method.

race A social construction to describe a group of people who share physical and cultural traits as well as a common ancestry.

race-based job channeling A mechanism of labor market discrimination in which similarly qualified applicants of different races are told they should apply for job openings at different levels.

racial democracy A society in which color and ethnic differences do not affect life chances.

racial enclave economy An economy in which a business's success is both shaped and limited by the racial group membership of the business owner.

racial formation As defined by Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994), "the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed."

racial ideology A set of principles and ideas that (1) divides people into racial groups and (2) serves the interests of one group.

racial justice The creation of a society devoid of racial oppression.

racial microaggression Daily, commonplace insults and racial slights that cumulatively affect the psychological well-being of people of color.

racial profiling The use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspicion.

racial project As defined by Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994), a way of giving meaning to racial categories through cultural representations and social structures.

racialization The process by which people come to be recognized as part of a racial group.

racialized assimilation The process through which immigrants adopt the racial identities of their host country.

racialized social systems societies structured by racial categorizations

racially restrictive covenants Contractual agreements that prevent the sale or lease of property within an area to non-White people.

racism (1) The belief that races are populations of people whose physical differences are linked to significant cultural and social differences and that these innate hierarchical differences can be measured and judged. (2) The practice of subordinating races believed to be inferior.

Reaganomics The economic policies of former U.S. president Ronald Reagan, involving heavy cuts to a wide variety of social programs across the country.

recognition The first of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: recognizing the harms created by racism.

reconstruction The third of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: acting on the knowledge that harm has been inflicted on racial groups.

redlining A practice where banks deny mortgages in areas where people of color live. (If you are curious which areas of your city were redlined, you can find the redlining maps at the Mapping Inequality website.)

reparations The fourth of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: repairing damage and providing restitution for past harms against racial groups.

residential segregation The separation of different groups of people into distinct neighborhoods.

responsibility The second of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: acknowledging that someone is responsible for the harms inflicted on racial groups.

rhetorical strategy Way of expressing racist ideas without being labeled as racist.

Sapphire One of the main characters on the television show *Amos 'n' Andy*; the caricature of an angry Black woman.

school-to-prison pipeline A set of practices that lead to children being funneled from public schools into the juvenile and criminal justice system.

scientific racism The use of science or pseudoscience to reproduce and/or justify racial inequalities.

segregation A policy of racial separation ensuring that White people have access to the best opportunities and facilities.

segregation index Measure that describes the percentage of 88 percent non-White people who would have to move in order for the city to be fully residentially integrated.

shifting standards A mechanism of labor market discrimination in which job applicants of different races receive different responses despite similar levels of experience.

skills mismatch hypothesis The hypothesis that African American men in particular often do not have the skills required to secure work in the current economy.

skin-color privilege The privilege of being considered more beautiful, intelligent, or otherwise superior as a result of having lighter skin.

skin-color stratification A system in which resources such as income and status are distributed unequally according to skin color.

slave codes Laws enacted in the 1660s that clearly spelled out the differences between African slaves and European indentured servants.

social capital Relationships and networks that offer social and other benefits.

social construction An idea or way of viewing people based not on biological differences but on social perceptions.

social isolation where poor people do not have access to role models, networks, and opportunities because of concentrated disadvantage.

sociological theory of racism Sociological explanation for how racial inequality is created and reproduced.

spatial mismatch hypothesis Hypothesis that African American families have been excluded from buying homes in the suburbs where much of the job growth has occurred, thereby creating a disconnect between where African Americans live and where the jobs are concentrated.

split labor market A difference in the price of labor for two or more groups of laborers.

steering A practice by which real estate agents show homes in White neighborhoods only to White people and homes in Black neighborhoods only to Black people.

stereotype A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a type of person or thing.

sterilization racism Racist health care policies and practices that attempt to control the reproductive capacities of women of color.

structural racism Interinstitutional interactions across time and space that reproduce racial inequality.

structural violence government policies and practices that harm people

subprime loan High-interest loan to someone at high risk of defaulting.

symbolic violence As described by Pierre Bourdieu (1984), the power of a socially dominant group to make its preferences, tastes, and norms

appear to be superior to those of the nondominant group.

systemic racism As defined by Joe Feagin (2001), a diverse assortment of racist practices, encompassing daily microaggressions, deep-seated inequalities, historical inequalities, and anti-Black ideologies.

Trails of Tears The forced displacement of the Cherokee of Georgia, the Apalachicola of Florida, the Peoria of Illinois, the Shawnee of Ohio, and a host of other tribes.

underemployment A category including jobless workers actively seeking work, people who are working part time yet are available to work full time, and those who have looked for work in the past year and yet are not actively seeking employment.

wage gap Differences in hourly earnings (wages) among racial groups.

wage of Whiteness As defined by W. E. B. DuBois in 1936, psychological benefits that White workers received by aligning with the dominant group, their White bosses, as opposed to developing working-class solidarity with recently freed Black slaves.

wealth The sum total of a person's assets minus debt. Wealth is built up over a lifetime and passed on to the next generation through inheritances.

weathering hypothesis A framework used to explain the increasing divergence between Black and White health outcomes that focuses on how constant exposure to stress accelerates health decline for Black people.

White person of color A person who appears to be White, yet identifies with a non-White group.

White privilege The advantages inherent in being categorized as White.

White supremacy A system of racial stratification that places White people at the top of the hierarchy.

whitening The process by which a person and his or her offspring become Whiter as a result of social status and/or intermarriage.

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Credits

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza
University of California, Merced

Photo Credits

Chapter 1

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Chapter 3

PAGE 64 [CO 3 Blind] Private Collection / Photo © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images; **PAGE 66** [Photo 3-0 cover of How to Be An Anti-Racist (Kendi)] How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi, Penguin Random House 2019; **PAGE 68** [Photo 3-1a George Zimmerman (left)] AP Photo/Gary W. Green, Orlando Sentinel, Pool; **PAGE 71** [Photo 3-2 Black Lives Matter protester] Janine Wiedel Photolibrary / Alamy Stock Photo; **PAGE 74** [Photo 3-4 World War II Japanese families] Bettmann/Getty Images; **PAGE 75** [Photo 3-5 Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu] MANDEL NGAN/AFP/Getty Images; **PAGE 76** [Photo 3-6 Tuskegee Syphilis experiment] National Archives, Atlanta, GA (1932) Tuskegee Syphilis Study Pictures; **PAGE 79** [Photo 3-7 Rosa Parks] Bettmann/Getty Images; **PAGE 81** [Photo 3-8 Little Rock Central High School] Bettmann/Getty Images; **PAGE 85** [Photo 3-9 Daniel Patrick Moynihan] Scott J. Ferrell/Congressional Quarterly / Alamy Stock Photo; **PAGE 89** [Photo 3-10 Inauguration Day, 2017] REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst

Chapter 4

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List of Illustrations

Employment of Negroes in Agriculture. Earle Wilton Richardson. 1934. Oil on canvas, 48 × 32 in.

When people in the United States are unsure of someone's race, many feel compelled to ask: "What are you?"

Although slavery was common in Ancient Greece, the idea of race did not yet exist.

When Christopher Columbus encountered the native peoples of the Caribbean, he found them to be peaceable and generous.

Tenochtitlán

Between ten and thirty million Africans were brought to the Americas on slave ships. Nearly a quarter of them died while at sea.

In Bacon's Rebellion, White indentured servants joined forces with enslaved Africans to protest their conditions.

Under President Jackson's administration, tens of thousands of Native Americans died as a result of forced displacements known as the Trail of Tears.

A racist illustration from Josiah Clark Nott and George Robert Gliddon's Indigenous Races of the Earth (1857), showing perceived distinctions between the White man, the Black man, and the chimpanzee.

America 1985. Diana Ong.

Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island were subjected to not only invasive medical inspections but also intelligence testing.

Carrie and Emma Buck. Carrie was sterilized under Virginia's eugenics program.

Wong Foon Chuck

The cover of an 1878 fictional story about the supposed economic and moral threats posed by large-scale Chinese immigration.

Takao Ozawa. In Takao Ozawa v. United States (1922), the Court ruled that Whiteness is defined by Caucasian ancestry.

Bhagat Singh Thind, denied citizenship because he was not considered White despite his Caucasian ancestry.

Figure 2-1 Immigration to the United States, 1820–1940

Italian American family sewing garments in their tenement in New York City, 1913.

The appropriation of Native American lands was enacted through violence. This image depicts settlers murdering the Yuki people in California in 1861.

Cross burning at Klan members' meeting, circa 1900.

Lynching scene in Texas, 1905: A Black man, accused of having attacked a White woman, is hanged immediately.

Blind. Dane Chanase. Oil on canvas, 111 × 86.5 cm.

George Zimmerman ended Trayvon Martin's life, yet was acquitted of murder.

A series of police killings led to the creation of the Black Lives Matter hashtag and movement, which are part of a broad campaign against racial violence.

The majority of states enacted some variant of segregation laws, legally denying non-Whites access to facilities designated for Whites only.

During World War II, Japanese families, such as the Mochida family, were ordered to evacuate and were placed in internment camps.

Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu.

During the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, Black men were diagnosed

with syphilis, yet were never treated for it or told they had it.

Rosa Parks on a Montgomery bus the day after the segregation codes were repealed, with a White reporter behind her.

Elizabeth Eckford on her first day at Little Rock Central High School on September 4, 1957, surrounded by White people yelling insults at both her and the U.S. marshals ensuring the implementation of laws permitting integration.

American politician Daniel Patrick Moynihan argued in a 1965 report that the breakdown of the Black family was a principal cause of poverty in the Black community. This culturally racist stance ignores structural factors such as discriminatory employment policies and practices.

Inauguration Day, 2017. Whereas Obama sought racial conciliation, Trump campaigned using messages that were at times overtly racist.

Mr. Prejudice. Horace Pippin. 1943. Oil on canvas, 18-1/8 × 14-1/8 in.

The presumption that Asian Americans use chopsticks at every meal is based on an idea of inherent cultural differences. We don't see these same presumptions applied to third-generation Italian Americans or Irish Americans

Monica Carrillo gathering signatures in the 2012 campaign "Sign up against racism" in Peru.

Protestors calling for the end of police brutality march through New York in 2015. Young Black men are twenty-one times more likely than young white men to be killed by police.

People wade through floodwaters on their way to the Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana, looking for shelter in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Figure 4-1 Median net worth of White, Latinx, and Black households, 2014

Students graduating from Haskell Indian Nations University, in Lawrence, Kansas.

Mural from the Wide Open Walls art village project, Kubuneh, near Brikama, The Gambia.

Prior to the civil rights era, shows such as Amos ‘n’ Andy , which poked fun at African Americans, were commonplace.

(a) Hattie McDaniel as “Mammy” in the movie Gone with the Wind (1939). (b) The Mammy stereotype is encapsulated in the “Aunt Jemima” logo, portrayed here by Anna Robinson in the 1930s. (c) In 1989, Quaker changed the logo to a less offensive image.

The sitcom Black-ish addresses serious issues related to race and racism.

Figure 5-1 Representations of Black, Latinx, and White People on Television

Jane the Virgin features a mostly Latinx cast and breaks from stereotypical portrayals.

Asked to help add authenticity to the TV series Homeland , artists spray-painted the graffiti message above in Arabic, which translates to “Homeland is racist.” The message appears in the background of a scene in Season 5.

Fresh Off the Boat features characters who are dynamic, stylish, and engaging. It is the first prime-time American sitcom in two decades to focus on an Asian American family.

Jorge Benavides in drag and brownface, playing “La Paisana Jacinta” in Peru’s “Humor Special.”

Memes such as this make fun of stereotypes.

Figure 5-2 People of color as a percentage of U.S. population versus Oscar nominations

Figure 5-3 Increase in nonwhite-male lead actors over time.

Social Colorism. Noe Vicente. Oil on canvas, 39.4 × 39.4 in.

In Harlem in the 1920s, the Black elite were disproportionately light-skinned.

Over one hundred social categories can be identified in these casta paintings from the Spanish colonies.

In Thailand, a 2016 commercial for a skin-whitening pill called Snowz proclaimed, “Just being white, you will win.”

Satirical depiction of Indian marriage ads to highlight colorism

Figure 6-1 Percentage of Women in African Countries Who Use Skin-Bleaching Products

A billboard advertising a skin-lightening product called “Khess Petch” in Dakar, Senegal.

The scale of skin-color darkness used by the research team.

Many Latina stars, such as Selena Gomez, are very light-skinned—a trait often associated with beauty around the globe.

Mural das Etnias, Rio de Janeiro, painted by the artist Eduardo Kobra.

Grey’s Anatomy star Jesse Williams acknowledges that his blue eyes and light skin grant him privileges.

Namira Islam, executive director of the Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC), argues that by modifying our use of language, we can reshape our thinking on skin color and beauty.

Orgy-Night of the Rich (detail). Diego Rivera. 1926. Mural.

The case of Brock Turner showed how White privilege is enacted.

Retailers often racially profile and treat White customers better than non-White customers.

Flesh colored crayons.

The concept of intersectionality recognizes that people can be privileged in some ways and not privileged in others.

Figure 7-1 Latinx Racial Identifications in the U.S. Census Over half of all Latinxs self-identified as “White.”

Figure 7-2 Probability of External Classification as White by Phenotype and Household Income among Latinxs

Figure 7-3 Percentage of Multiracial Children Who Identify as White, Minority, or Multiracial

Figure 7-4 How U.S. Census Race Categories Have Changed over Time

These three people are from the major racial groups in Peru: indigenous, Black, and White. If they were to migrate to the United States, would all three be classified as Latinx?

The Family at Work Together (detail from the Ministry of Education frescoes). Diego Rivera. 1923-1928. Fresco.

A teacher reads to his students at a segregated school in Uno, Virginia, in 1947.

Tom Torlino, who was Navajo, as he entered the school in 1882 (left), and how he appeared three years later.

Students in cadet uniforms at the Carlisle Indian School, c. 1880.

Mexican American girls in elementary school in New Mexico, 1943.

Figure 8-1 The Return of Segregation after Release from Court Oversight (Year 0 in Figure) Stanford researchers used a “dissimilarity index” to measure segregation, from 0 (balanced integration) to 1 (complete segregation).

Demonstrators in support of affirmative action in schools gather outside the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015.

Figure 8-2 Share of Students Who Graduate from Four-Year Universities within Six Years, by Year They Entered College

Each summer since 2005, UC Riverside has hosted The Gathering of the Tribes, an annual program designed to encourage Native Americans to go to college.

Figure 8-3 Average National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Scale Scores of Fourth- and Eighth-Grade Students, by Race/Ethnicity: 1992, 2003, 2015

Figure 8-4 Average National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading scale scores of fourth- and eighth-grade students, by race/ethnicity: 1992, 2003, 2015

Why are schools often internally segregated?

Schools that are predominantly White are more likely to have advanced placement (AP) classes than primarily Black and Latinx schools.

Figure RF 8.1 Immigrant Selectivity: Chinese, Vietnamese, and Mexican Immigrants Age 25 or Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

The Female Workers Were the Last to Arrive North (The Migration Series, Panel No. 57). Jacob Lawrence. 1940–1941. Casein tempera on hardboard.

With the Washington Monument in the background, activists stand in place to form a "99%," part of Occupy DC activities in 2011 to protest income and wealth inequality.

Figure 9-1 Gini Coefficients in the Americas, 2017

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The Block. Romare Bearden. 1971. Cut and pasted printed, colored and metallic papers, photostats, graphite, ink marker, gouache, watercolor, and ink on Masonite. 48 x 216 in.

Figure 10-1 Ideal, Perceived, and Actual Wealth Distribution in the United States

Deed from 1929 noting restrictions on renting or selling a home to non-Whites in Seattle.

Reproduction of a racially restrictive covenant from Washington, DC Source: Office of Recorded Deeds, Washington, DC.

A sign in the integrated Long Island community of Lakeview, New York, in 1962 reads: “Negroes! This community could become another ghetto. You owe it to your ‘family’ to buy in another community.”

A real estate developer built a half-mile wall in Detroit in 1940 to separate a Black from a White community. Today, because of White flight, the wall separates one Black community from another.

In the aftermath of the 2007–2009 housing crisis, protestors, like these in Brooklyn in 2011, fought back against predatory lenders and foreclosures in their communities.

Figure 10-2 Diversity Experienced in Each Group's Typical Neighborhood, by Race/Ethnicity, 2010

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A protestor holds a sign in remembrance of Sandra Bland.

Troy Davis.

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Over half of all inmates have minor children, who suffer the collateral consequences of mass incarceration.

Telegraph Poles with Buildings. Joseph Stella. 1917. Oil on canvas, 36 1/4 × 30 1/4 in.

Dr. James Marion Sims carried out horrific operations on enslaved women such as Anarcha without their consent.

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Residents of Flint pick up bottled water and water filters from Red Cross disaster relief volunteers.

Homeless. Dane Chanase. 1930. Oil on panel, 72 × 48 in.

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Immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean are more likely to face deportation because of AEDPA and IIRIRA laws.

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“Civilization is a method of living, an attitude of equal respect of all men,”—Jane Addams, Speech, Honolulu, 1933. From the series Great Ideas of Western Man. George Giusti. 1955. India ink and gouache on paper, 24-7/8 × 18-5/16 in.

Children wave U.S. flags at the fiftieth anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington.

An activist at a 2017 march in San Francisco calls for reparations for the descendants of slaves.

Protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2016. The construction of the pipeline could endanger the lives and well-being of a tribe of Native Americans.

Bertha and William Garrett.

Undocumented students from around the country demand passage

of the DREAM Act despite the threat of arrest and deportation.

Opal Tometi.

Arizona resident Leslie Evans wipes tears from her eyes as she talks about what it is like to be stuck in the cycle of domestic violence. An intersectional framework can shed light on why women of color are overrepresented in domestic violence shelters.

Nelson Mandela. Werner Opitz.

Mourners sing outside the home of former South African president and anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela following his death in 2013. Even after the end of apartheid, tremendous inequality has persisted in South Africa.

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A demonstration for the regularization of undocumented migrants (les sans-papiers) in Paris, France.

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